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# SCRUTINY

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# THE CUSTOM OF WAR AND THE NOTION OF PEACE[1]

*'Now is the time when thoughtful people ought to be considering the real social implications of the war . . . I urge that every citizen should be directing his mind not to tiding over an immediate difficulty but to beginning the building of new foundations now.'—Mr. Ernest Bevin, Minister of Labour and National Service, November 20th, 1940.*

## I. DOMINATION & SOCIAL INTEGRATION.

WARFARE is one of several forms of violence in social life. Its distinguishng feature, according to H. D. Lasswell,[2] is that the violence is directed against people outside the community, is justified in the name of the community, and is accepted by the community. But the use of violence against other people is not a simple matter psychologically. From the merely logical standpoint one might suppose that human enemies could be treated like any other obstacle and wiped out as simply as possible. In fact, we are unable to do that without compunction. Other people have a social meaning for us; they are not just objects in the material world.

The result is that a surprising feature of much social violence, including war, is its moderation. If two men quarrel and come to blows, the fights ends long before either man is annihilated. The winner is satisfied with a much more moderate degree of victory. He stops as soon as his opponent, rather than suffer any more, agrees to a social relationship which the victor considers

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[1]A shortened form of chapters from a book on psychology and war which was completed last March and was to have been published earlier this year.

[2]World Politics and Personal Insecurity, 1935.

satisfactory: submission, apology, recognition of the victor's rights, or what not. In other words, what may look like a determined effort to annihilate one another is really an attempt on each side to establish a tolerable social relationship with the other.

This queer inconsistency in social violence is given its clearest recognition in the institution of the duel. The European duel was only one form of an extremely widespread custom of settling disputes by means of regulated combat. The device gives institutional recognition to the fact that even if social violence should at times result in killing, its underlying intention is to redress the social balance. It not only recognises the fact, it also reinforces it and reminds the combatants to regulate their violence. How effective it may be, in spite of its seeming illogicality, can be judged from accounts of its operation among primitive peoples.

In the same way, a *social* intention underlies wars as we know them. We might—many people do—suppose that each nation's aim must be to exterminate its enemy as quickly and economically as possible. Nothing of the sort: certain effective means are strictly prohibited, rules and restrictions hamper the belligerents on all sides and each devotes a great deal of propaganda to persuading the world that he is doing all he can to conduct the war 'humanely,' satanic though his enemy is. There is, in fact, an implicit understanding that, in spite of the boundless destructiveness envisaged in war preparations, the combatants are co-operating in a social institution for the settlement of their disputes. They are not trying to exterminate one another in the way they would exterminate locusts; they are trying by coercion to secure their rights within a social framework. The notion of 'humane warfare,' and the older notion of chivalrous warfare, ought by superficial logic to be irresistibly comic. In fact we take them solemnly, for they reflect firmly established ways of regarding violence in social life. The aggressive impulse is sanctioned, but it must not be taken to its logical conclusion in extermination; it must not lead us to behave towards human beings as if they were just dangerous animals. In so far as extermination does occur it is deplored by the victors as a needless waste brought about entirely by the perverse rulers of the vanquished state.

There is in fact extraordinarily little cool extermination of other people. Very few deliberated, unregretted murders occur in

civil life. In war-time exasperated adolescent minds (of all chronological ages) sometimes think that they would like the national enemy of the moment to be exterminated. But their attitude is generally muddled. For underlying what they say there is also nearly always the illogical intention of *punishing* the victim; they fail to see that they cannot redress the social balance by obliterating the possibility of further contact with the wrong-doer. But most people implicitly admit that the violence is an unfortunate breach of community, necessary perhaps, but intended to allow of more satisfactory relationships being established in the future.

Here, however, we must pause. It is no use contrasting war with ' more satisfactory social relationships ' unless we can say what those are. What have we in mind as the ideal against which war is condemned? Is it enough, for instance, for the hostilities between nations to become non-violent and to be carried on with tariff barriers, boycotts, cornering of raw materials, and attacks on each other's currency? No doubt this is better than physical warfare. And yet, forcing a rival state to capitulate in face of poverty, and keeping smaller states in economic (and therefore political) bondage, is surely a rather shallow conception of peace.

Perhaps we have in mind an international order in which there would be no coercion, either military or economic, of one nation by another. But how can we hope for such a state of affairs internationally, when coercion is still the rule between individuals within the nation, where conditions have for long been much more favourable? True, there is comparatively little violent coercion in civil life. But economic power, however, indirectly exercised, is just as effective. A very large part of political life, working life, and of course family life, is organised by power, by putting one person in a position where others must do as he tells them—while he in turn has to do what somebody else tells him. If we take as our ideal of ' peace ' a texture of social life in which coercion and domination play no part, or only a small part, we shall be very remote from the practical politics of the moment. Yet we need some such conception. For without it we have as it were no psychological base-line from which to survey the various forms of conflict and antagonism, whether war or the many varieties that fall short of it.

The question is whether such non-dominative social organisation is even conceivable. Many psychologists, however they phrased their views, would agree with McDougall in assuming that all social intercourse is cast in the mould of self-assertion and self-submission. American psychology, as its custom is, has sought a means of measuring the degree of a person's ' ascendance ' and ' submissiveness ' (in Allport's ' A-S Scale '). And, with a few exceptions, the consensus of psychological opinion has been that domination and submission provide the normal pattern of social intercourse, each offering its own satisfactions. In this, the psychological view has been at one with everyday opinion. And, we must note, it is a view which implies that warfare is only an unusually violent form of an inescapable social pattern.

But the nature of self-assertion and self-submission needs to be looked at more closely. They are relationships which only occur when differences arise, differences of opinion, intention, judgment, taste and so on. The people concerned may, of course, simply ' agree to differ '; they insulate themselves from each other over that particular point. But if they wish to maintain close social contact (as they must, for instance, if they are to co-operate in a piece of work) they must reach agreement. Each, perhaps, must give way a little. The self-assertive or dominative person is one who expects that in such a case he will give way less than the other.

Incidentally we must notice that self-assertion is not achieved solely by force. Affectionate relationships permit it equally. The unspoken threat of withdrawing affection, besides various other forms of emotional bullying, is quite as effective as forcible domination. But whether force or affection is used the result is the same in that agreement is reached either because one person submits totally or because both make partial submission.

One-sided and extreme forms of this relationship are found in the submission of slave to master, where force is the ultimate sanction, and of child to parent, where affection plays a large part. Such social relationships as these certainly offer many satisfactions. But in most people's view they are not the finest development of social life. Companionship with equals gives greater satisfactions. Agreement given by an equal is more gratifying than the submission of child, servant or subordinate. It is more gratifying because he was perfectly free to oppose you. The agreement of an equal takes

the form, ' Why yes, of course, I see now that you're right '; the submissive associate is too prone to say in effect, ' Well, I don't quite see it, but no doubt you're right.'

Now to leave his associate genuinely free to disagree with him without discomfort is not characteristic of the self-assertive person. Disagreement with him is apt to cause some cooling or some rift in the social relationship. Even if he permits the disagreement, it is not genuinely welcome. To welcome disagreement means exposing one's self to change, and to many people that seems hazardous. They must hang on to their own individuality at all costs. As the Sutties[3] have pointed out, ' By death an adult means loss of individuality.' It follows that differences of outlook in other people, which invite us to change ourselves, cannot be positively welcomed unless we feel secure; that is, unless we feel that there is so wide a margin of safety between ourselves and disintegration that we can assimilate great changes of outlook without fear of losing our individuality.

But welcoming the opportunity which differences present does not mean mere submission either. The submissive partner is not developing the full possibilities of a social situation any more than the assertive one. He aims almost exclusively at agreement and harmony. But putting the emphasis there, instead of asking whether what they agree about is satisfactory in itself, he too emasculates the social situation and diminishes its possibilities. He makes harmony too easy to mean anything. He may be as docile as a weathercock, and still his personality will not really change, for its permanent structure actually consists, to a great extent, in this dependent agreement with the forceful personality of the moment. On the other hand his docility may be sham and his submission only lip-service for the sake of peace and quiet. If so he is in effect withdrawing his individuality, inviolate and unchanged, from the social situation. He is merely a would-be dominative person frustrated. And this type of person also diminishes the social possibilities, depriving both himself and his associate of the opportunity given in equal companionship.

True equality in a social contact was implied in the idea of

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[3]I. D. and J. I. Suttie, ' The Mother: Agent or Object,' Pts. I and II, *Brit. J. Med. Psy.*, XI and XII, 1932 and 1933.

' primitive comradeship ' put forward by F. C. Bartlett.[4] He explicitly rejected McDougall's view that all social responsiveness fell into the pattern of domination and submissiveness. He had in mind, however, mainly team-work and other forms of co-operation where there is a difference of function between those who take part but where they already have a common aim. But non-dominative behaviour is conceivable even when differences of aim and outlook arise between two people. This possibility has been expounded by H. H. Anderson, an American psychologist who has made studies of the social behaviour of young children.[5] Taking the view that domination and submission are only obverse and reverse of the same social relationship, he looks for a different, an alternative relationship. This he finds in what he calls ' social integration.'

In this ' integrative behaviour ' the one partner certainly has plans and views and an outlook of his own, and certainly hopes that his companion will agree with them and co-operate with him. Yet it is not his primary aim to secure agreement with them as they stand. Instead he regards his contact with a companion as an opportunity for testing their validity, trying them out in the setting of a different personality. This does not mean merely being ready to modify them under pressure. It means an over-riding concern to be impartial in making his suggestions and to avoid all pressure or forcefulness or undue persuasiveness which would make criticism more difficult. All he does is to offer his companion a new possibility of behaviour or belief and try to ensure that obstacles to the fair understanding of it are removed. At the same time he is exposing himself and his intentions to the reaction they produce in his companion. The conception is of a fully reciprocal social process by which two people are each modified and something new, unpredictable and different from both of them emerges. It is a development of personality, ' a process of change in structure or function that results from increasingly complex relations with persons different from one's self.'

What Anderson means by integration is made clearer by the

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[4]Psychology and Primitive Culture, 1923.

[5]See ' Domination and Social Integration in the Behavior of Kindergarten Children and Teachers,' *Genetic Psychology Monographs*, 21, 3, August, 1939.

account he gives of domination and submission. The dominative person knows what he believes and what he wants, and he has no intention of changing because he meets someone who thinks differently. As Anderson puts it:

> ' He does not yield to differences; he is not abandoning his status; he is trying to preserve status. He is not seeking a better understanding of another nor is he trying to achieve a redefining of desires, values, or objectives in order to discover a lower common denominator of differences. . . Domination seeks not self-abandoning, but self-preservation. It resists change.'

As for submission, Anderson goes on:

> ' Domination tends to induce resistance. But resistance is itself dominative behaviour. If the relative strength is too great domination will produce submission.
>
> ' Resistance and submission are both fear responses; they show fear of losing *status quo*. Submission is not to be confused with yielding. Submission is a coerced response of fear; it is not spontaneous. Yielding is a spontaneous response by an individual so unconcerned with his own security that he is not afraid to change or give up his present status.'

For the present purpose the importance of ' social integration ' is that it stands for a mode of handling divergences of aim and opinion which is *totally* different from war and not just a more restrained form of the same dominative behaviour. It is true that this is very remote from practical politics. But if we want to find an uncompromising meaning for ' peace '—and without this a discussion of war is apt to be inconclusive—the idea of integration holds out one possibility.

' Integration!' exclaims the sceptical reader, '—more jargon and mystery mongering! What is there here except the perfectly familiar facts of co-operation and compromise?' Admittedly, integrative behaviour has always been practised; it was not originated in the nursery schools of Iowa where Anderson studied it. But on the other hand co-operation and compromise as we usually meet them are something very different from what Anderson

describes. The ' co-operativeness ' that we pay lip-service to may perhaps be the same as integration. The co-operation we meet in practice is totally different. In most cases it means that two or more people find that they have some aim in common, so that each can achieve his object more effectively if they work as a team. At other times it means that by helping someone to achieve his object we indirectly achieve our own as well; most forms of employment and buying and selling involve this sort of co-operation. But in all these instances we are dealing with mutual help in achieving aims which each partner has already formulated for himself and is not invited to change. Integration, on the other hand, is a mode of handling *differences* of aim. Again we sometimes call a person ' co-operative ' when we mean ' submissive ' or docile in helping us with our own plans. And finally there are occasions when ' co-operation ' means that we submit to help our associate in *his* aims on the understanding that we can claim his submissive help in *our* aims later on. Now in all these cases integrative behaviour may at times occur. But it need not. Such co-operation may—and commonly does—take place without it.

What of compromise? Here certainly differences of opinion or aim—the essential preliminary to integration—do occur. But the compromises that we generally meet with still fall short of integration. They occur when the effort at domination has been so powerful on both sides that each has had to concede a point and make partial submission in order to secure what he wants in other directions. No new principle is introduced by compromise; the domination is no longer on one side only, but domination and submission still provide the mould in which the relationship is cast. What results is a mixture of the original opposing aims, not a true compound. And, of course, in most compromises neither side is satisfied. Each would still prefer his original intention. In social integration, by contrast, each partner has spontaneously accepted the newly emergent aim as more satisfying than what he originally intended. Thus there seems ample reason to use some special term for this type of social interaction. The term ' reciprocity,' used for instance by Piaget in his studies of children's social development, refers largely to compromise and co-operation, mere social bargaining. ' Integration ' seems as good a word as any, conveying as it does the idea of different structures or functions interacting to

form a genuine whole.[6]

It is integrative behaviour which gives the greatest social significance to other people, and to practise it extensively means that social responsiveness is highly developed in comparison with other interests and desires. Other people are taken seriously. The greatest possible significance is given both to their sanctioning and to their challenging of one's own personality. Domination, in contrast, always involves a belittling of other people's social significance; they become helpers, or dependants, or employees, instead of companions. At the extreme, they may be treated only as if they were tools or obstacles, objects in the external world that happen to be animate and so have more varied powers than rocks and stones and trees. War, of course, is bound to belittle the social significance of people in this way.

It is from this point of view that war appears only as an extreme form of a mode of social behaviour that is widely accepted as inevitable. Many have pointed out that there is no complete change of outlook when people go to war. One way of putting the fact is to say with Lasswell (*op. cit.*) that the populations of the world live in the ' expectation of violence ' as the only way of bringing to an end—favourably or calamitously—their gathering insecurities. Violent coercion may be staved off for a long while, but it is awaited as the ultimate outcome of the crises of tension between conflicting national aims. No other conclusive way of handling the dispute can be conceived. In civil life, domination is the recognised solution to dispute. Economic pressure, the leverage of social status, and the persuasive manipulation of public opinion are the usual weapons. The individual makes his final appeal to physical force only through the central authority, the law and police. He need not use physical violence on his own responsibility. But there is no supra-national authority, and the nation must act on its own responsibility. When a nation sets about dominating another by force, in order to settle a dispute, the citizen feels that

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[6]One of the central themes of E. Graham Howe's *War Dance* (1937), if I understand it, is the contrast between integrative and dominative behaviour. Those for whom my account of the matter is too arid may find that the idea can be assimilated more readily in the idiom of *War Dance*.

it is only doing what he would finally have to do in civil life if there were no central authority.

He would do it with regret, just as he regrets the necessity for his nation to go to war. For he realises, dimly or clearly, that he has social impulses which conflict with the intention of annihilating other human beings as if they were only inconvenient objects in the material world. They are part of his social world; even in the front line trenches he may develop an inconvenient tendency to fraternise with them. The institutions regulating war give these social impulses a form that makes them more manageable and at the same time more systematic and predictable in their outcome. Prisoners are to be treated in specified ways, the wounded given consideration, civilians spared, certain types of weapon avoided, and so forth. These regulations are a way of recognising that war is not a matter of simple attack on natural obstacles; we do not blast away a nation with the same cheerfulness as we do a fall of rock. War is a way of influencing people socially, of getting them to recognise our rights and to accept a social relationship with us of a sort that we consider satisfactory. It is the survivors of the defeated nation that we are really interested in. Killing their friends has not been a way of improving the material world, as killing malarial mosquitoes would be; it has been the only way we could find of putting right something in the social world.

The reason it seems to be the only way is that dominative behaviour in the face of disagreements is the only means that has received effective public recognition and been strongly institutionalised. Integrative behaviour does occur, and if we could give it public, institutional status, we should notice it more readily. We might then be surprised to find how frequent it already is. But look at the newspapers, or listen to scraps of conversation in the street, and observe how much more interested we are in dispute and conflict. Sticking up for your own opinion, standing firm for ' what you know to be right,' refusing to be turned aside—in fact securing the maximum social influence for what you already are instead of trying to develop—these are the attitudes which we encourage and for which our legal institutions cater. And they are the attitudes which we eventually express in war.

It is from this standpoint that we need to view the widespread conviction that some form of coercion is necessary in order to secure

a peaceful world order. Most people who work to eradicate war by political reform are believers in international coercive authority of one sort or another. Such plans as collective security, the New Commonwealth scheme, and Federal Union, all envisage a form of international army or armed ' police ' to enforce the decisions of a supra-national authority. It is only natural that a dominative society, trying to root out the most dangerous form of its domination, should turn at once to domination on an even grander scale.

The method has had some success in the past, as the relative peacefulness of various empires and united kingdoms shows. But many of these unions have broken up, and the peacefulness is only relative. The disruption may just miss armed conflict, as in the secession of Norway from Sweden. Or there may be fighting, as in Ireland; the fact that it only has the status of a rebellion and a punitive expedition hardly makes such a conflict preferable to war. Any huge block of social groups with a central government holds these dangers, even if authority has been willingly delegated to the government in the first place. Nor is it safe to assume that overwhelming military power in the hands of the central government will prevent war. The small wars of recent history have shown that local resistance may be desperately strong against tremendous odds.

It happens that Freudian doctrine also supports the view that central coercion is the only possible means of securing a peaceful world. Lasswell, for instance, hoping for a ' world state,' follows Freud in believing that a monopoly of coercion in the hands of some élite is a necessary part of it. He sees clearly that the violence of war tapers off into authoritative coercion of other kinds. To him the problem is not to persuade people to renounce ' coerciveness,' but to ensure that it is used to support a total world policy—of a type, of course, that he happens to approve of. In taking this line Lasswell is following Freud, who maintained that ' It is just as impossible to do without government of the masses by a minority as it is to dispense with coercion in the work of civilisation.' But there is ample room for disagreement with Freud's doctrine on this point, and the case against it has been well put by Ian Suttie.[7] Suttie takes the view that Freud's mind never emerged

[7] *The Origins of Love and Hate* (1935).

from the extremely patriarchal mould in which it was formed and that this has in many respect produced distortions in his doctrines. Suttie's arguments are too detailed and extensive to summarise here, but to the non-Freudian his case is highly convincing. Among other distortions thus produced in Freudian doctrine Suttie includes the belief in the necessity of coercion. He notes Freud's belief that

> 'Leaders " should be independent of the masses by having at their disposal means of enforcing their authority." As Freud ranks himself with the moderns, presumably he means machine guns, poison gas and bombing planes. One is almost inclined to assume that Freud also is among the prophets who will be quoted by those who exclaim " Heil Hitler!" '

Freud's flight from Austria is one comment on his doctrine. Like many others who fled from that particular coercive order he could see no social principle to take the place of coercion. Much present-day sociological and political thinking is framed almost entirely in terms of domination. Its stress falls on social élites, the direction of the masses by propaganda, shifts of power within social groups, and the alignment of individuals and classes with the forces operating in social process; such thinking is cast rigidly in the mould of domination and submission.

## II. THE NOTION OF PEACE.

The assumptions of a dominative society have been challenged, and their psychological validity denied, by three writers of the nineteen-thirties: W. J. Perry, Ian Suttie, and H. H. Anderson. Perry,[8] whether we agree with the extreme form of his views or not, has effectively emphasised the fact that cultures very largely *create* their institutions of coercion and domination. Suttie has shown the mechanisms within the family which enable our society to perpetuate its dominative pattern, and which create a closed circuit shielding its assumptions from criticism. Anderson has given the most fundamental statement of the nature of domination and the alternative to it (besides bringing the question within range of

[8]See especially *The Primordial Ocean* (1935).

verifiable observation). The importance of these three writers is that they invite us to conceive of a texture of social life which would stand in true contrast to war and would not be merely a taming of the same coercive principle.

It is sometimes assumed that the most utopian hope for society is that of reaching a condition in which disagreements and dislikes no longer occur—neither between individuals nor between groups. Stressing the ' brotherhood of man,' some liberals and pacifists tend to deny the persistent differences between one social group and another; they belittle the differences between German and Frenchman, Jew and Gentile, negro and white, labourer and shopkeeper, village and city. Now this, for all its mild amiability, is a typical outcome of the dominative attitude. It shows the dominative mind in reverse, reacting against itself. L. H. Myers[9] has well typified it in the character of Smith, the humanist:

> ' People like Fazul, by the mere fact of their existence, give Smith evidence of the inadequacy of his conception of human nature, and arouse in him an unacknowledged hostility. Smith's intolerance of intolerance is nothing short of fanatical. He does not like to be disturbed in his comfortable belief that the whole human race, if it only knew its own mind a little better, would realise that it wants just what he wants and dislikes just what he dislikes.'

This type of humanism is not an alternative to domination. For a true alternative we must turn to some such conception as Anderson's ' social integration.' The integrative attitude aims neither at leaving people as they are nor at making them like oneself, for it regards differences between two people as mutual invitations to development. Far from denying differences, it gives the closest attention to them, seeing them as an enrichment of human potentiality. Such an attitude does not imply a spineless or irresponsible abandoning of standards, nor a meek submissiveness. It does not exclude strong preferences and bitter dislikes. All that it does exclude is the itch to root out what we dislike. It implies that even the complete conviction that another person's view is inferior to our own is no good reason for trying to alter it by pressure or

[9] *The Root and the Flower* (1935).

propaganda.[10] We can show the other person an alternative, if he is willing to be shown, but if he still likes his own way better there's an end to it. And this amounts to saying that if integrative behaviour is impossible at some points of contact with our associates, then at those points we must forgo any true *social* relationship. The self-deception of a dominative society consists in the belief that at such points full social satisfactions can still be obtained in the relationship of self-assertion and self-submission. In fact, the dominative society suggests that to win submissive deference from others is one of the highest satisfactions that social life can offer, whether to individuals or to national groups.

Here a possible misconception must be guarded against. It might be thought that a non-dominative society would involve a belief in some ' equality ' between people which would deny us the important satisfactions of winning social prestige. But this would be a complete mistake. The integrative relationship in social contacts means that an outstanding achievement by one person will win the *respect* of the others but not their *deference*. These terms will perhaps serve, though the reader may prefer others. All that matters is that the distinction should be noticed. The essential distinction is that when deference is present the admiration expressed for a particular achievement may be to some extent bogus, expressed partly in order not to disappoint the expectation of deference. But an achievement that wins simple respect has been judged without pressure to feel or express admiration unless the admiration arises spontaneously. If you withold respect the person who wanted it will be disappointed, and he may consider your judgment mistaken, but he will not consider that you have failed in an obligation to him. The social obligation is satisfied equally by admiration and by adverse criticism.

Giving a person respect implies that you admire him for some specific reason, but it does not commit you to admiring him in other directions or deferring to his opinions or acquiescing in his intentions. It implies the role of companion—at least at this point of contact—and not servant or subordinate. But where deference

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[10] I have tried to show the difference between propaganda and non-dominative social influence in an article in *The Sociological Review*, XXIX, 4 (October, 1937).

has been established the deferential person cannot withhold his respect from any of the other's achievements without some faint degree of rebellion. In polite society, naturally, this goes on with the utmost delicacy. Those who enjoy deference are often most anxious to encourage—at their own discretion—some measure of independent criticism in their associates. But in the last resort they expect and are expected to take the dominant part. Admiration, agreement, support, come not as social gifts made freely on each separate occasion, but partly as tribute in recognition of a permanent, generalised relationship existing between them and their associates. There can consequently never be any certainty that irrelevant pressures have not contributed to an opinion offered to one who enjoys deference.

Deference arises in a setting of domination and submission, respect in one of integration. But again it must be emphasised that respect does not imply equality between the companions concerned. The schoolboy respects certain famous cricketers; he is not equal to them, but he respects one and withholds respect from another according to his spontaneous convictions. On the other hand, his polite attention to the speech-day celebrity arises from deference. The celebrity has power over the young animate objects in front of him; the cricketer has the respect of young social beings. Naturally, in our society, respect and deference get hopelessly entangled. Respect for a particular achievement is constantly expected to carry with it general deference. The eminent scientist expects deference to his political views; the wealthy stockbroker to his taste in house furnishing; the distinguished military man to his views on the upbringing of children. Incidently, we must also notice that deference may be accompanied by love. Loving deference is the accepted attitude for young children towards their parents. At adolescence the tricky crossing to respect has to be attempted. What often emerges is continued affection, a show of deference, and no respect.

Social intercourse is at present organised mainly along gradients of deference. Noble birth, wealth, formal education, age, sex (producing deference for men and a show of deference for women), bureaucratic and quasi-bureaucratic authority, power to employ, and power to buy (even in a small way) are some of the guiding lines for deference. Fame and eminence, which might be

valued as a mark of the genuine respect of those competent to judge, are in fact valued largely for the deference they secure; hence there is no reason for not achieving them by fraud and bluff. A society in which respect took the place which deference at present holds, and integrative behaviour replaced dominative and submissive, would be remarkably different from ours. But as Ruth Benedict points out, very sweeping changes in social norms can occur, and have occurred even in western communities in comparatively recent times. When the change is complete the extreme representatives of the old norm strike us as pathological. Benedict[11] sees such a possibility for our own present culture:

> 'In our own generation extreme forms of ego-gratification are culturally supported in a similar fashion. Arrogant and unbridled egoists as family men, as officers of the law and in business, have been again and again portrayed by novelists and dramatists, and they are familiar in every community. Like the behaviour of Puritan divines, their courses of action are often more asocial than those of the inmates of penitentiaries. In terms of the suffering and frustration that they spread about them there is probably no comparison. There is very possibly at least as great a degree of mental warping. Yet they are entrusted with positions of great influence and importance and are as a rule fathers of families. Their impress both upon their own children and upon the structure of our society is indelible. They are not described in our manuals of psychiatry because they are supported by every tenet of our civilisation. They are sure of themselves in real life in a way that is possible only to those who are orientated to the points of the compass laid down in their own culture. Nevertheless a future psychiatry may well ransack our novels and letters and public records for illumination upon a type of abnormality to which it would not otherwise give credence.'

The tenets of our civilisation which sanction these people result from our social intercourse being cast in the mould of domination, resistance, submission and deference. In a more integrative society

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[11] *Patterns of Culture* (1935).

such people would stand out as quite evidently diseased.

But if we prefer integrative behaviour, what psychological roots has this preference? Is it just a personal choice which depends on temperamental qualities? I think it can be shown to have deeper roots. The objection to domination is that it comes inevitably into conflict with the more developed forms of social impulse. As social interests and the desire for companionship develop and are clarified it is towards integrative relationships that they lead. The domineering, the sycophantic, the aggressive, the obsequious, the over-pliant and the dependent all gain social satisfactions of a kind. But they all meet the same difficulty: companionship, sympathy, mutual liking and esteem, are satisfactions that cannot be obtained by using force or yielding to it. Our social development cannot proceed very far before this inherent objection to the use of force appears. Once we reach the point of wanting people not merely to serve and support us but also to like us and give us their free respect, force can never secure what we want. Demanding affection with menaces is an infantile weakness whose illogic we can easily see, at least in our more adult moments. But it takes some time to realise this, and naturally many people never do. All life long they try to bully others—with open aggressiveness or emotional blackmail—into liking them, respecting their views and achievements, giving them affectionate consideration. They often get a good imitation of what they want, but the observer—and often they themselves—can see it as

> . . . . . mouth honour, breath,
> Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

Or, worse still, they have a gnawing suspicion that they are being 'humoured.' The central dilemma of the dominative person is that he cannot high-handedly reject his associate's disagreement without implicitly depreciating his agreement. By domination he belittles the other person socially and so diminishes the value of his companionship. As social development proceeds, slaves, hired 'companions,' prostitutes, flatterers and parasites, yes-men and nodders grow less and less satisfactory. Companionship, appreciation, agreement offered freely and without pressure, these are what a developed social interest leads us to value.

Once a social conflict has taken an acute form, as in crime or

war, dominative behaviour may be prompted by the need for physical self-preservation. The criminal or enemy is treated simply as a dangerous object, his social significance falling into the background. But there are signs that this attitude is hard to maintain once the need for self-preservation has been met. The worst danger past, our social interest reasserts itself. This tendency has shown itself, for example, in the dealings of pioneers and colonists with the indigenous peoples. Fierce exterminatory wars are followed by a sobering-up process when the danger is clearly past, and the settlers then begin to make guilty efforts to save the remnants of the natives from extinction. Indeed, this question of whether the danger is past lies at the root of the whole problem of domination. Domination arises out of insecurity.

From this it follows that many people are socially responsive and can enter deeply into the situation of another only when that other is very obviously helpless. Doing down a slightly weaker business rival is one thing, but robbing a child's money-box or a blind man's begging cup is another. The civilian rejoices to hear of the ambushing of enemy troops; but the torpedoing of an enemy hospital ship would produce different feelings, and a properly conducted censorship spares him news of successes like that. In the same way it takes the wind out of our sails when a man we dislike falls seriously ill.

These familiar inconsistencies in our social attitudes mean that a dominative society tends to canalise its strongest social feelings and its impulses of tenderness in caring for the weak and helpless. A rather sentimental heightening of social responsiveness occurs in a limited direction. A more integrative texture of society would make us want to be deeply friendly and considerate even towards the able-bodied and mentally sound—even, that is, towards potential rivals. This is something totally different from 'humanitarian' feeling, and altogether more robust. It is a heightened social responsiveness which allows us to feel the *social* importance of ordinary people (not just the help or hindrance they can be to our own plans) without waiting till they are reduced to the psychological level of children, cripples, or paupers.

Such a form of social life would be many generations distant even if the whole world got on to the right lines at once. It is, therefore, 'utopian' in the derogatory sense of being difficult to

achieve. It is not utopian in the other sense, of producing a completely satisfactory society. People could live in integrative social intercourse and still pursue futile, crude, or puerile interests. The notion of social integration is quite limited. If refers only to the relations that people could establish with each other and not to the value of their pursuits. It refers in fact to a very simple state of social affairs which, as Anderson shows, can be seen amongst pre-school children. Yet it offers the only complete contrast to that type of social intercourse which finds a perfectly natural outcome in war.

## III. RELINQUISHING DOMINATION.

If this or something like it is our notion of peace, how do we set out towards reaching it? Must we work through the broad features of political machinery or through the more intimate structure of social life? If there seems to be an alternative here it is a delusion. Neither line of work can succeed without the other. In particular, political institutions can never far outrun the sentiments and habits of thought of the individual citizens. The citizen who browbeats his subordinates, bluffs and tricks his rivals, and is in turn snubbed by his wife and daughters, cannot suddenly become a different man when he argues about politics. He cannot wholeheartedly support an integrative policy in foreign affairs, a policy which may mean giving way when we have the power to stand firm. Political maturity cannot outrun ordinary social maturity. All that the political institution can do is to consolidate the more intimate social advances and thus help to create the conditions for further advance.

The first fact to be recognised is that the dominative method of handling differences cannot be relinquished while people feel insecure. As Anderson points out. domination is the product of insecurity in the face of differences and in turn generates further insecurity. Now one feature of our social order is the ' expectation of violence,' and this helps to keep alive throughout the nations the insecurity that we want to end. It follows that any changes that make for greater resistance to war may be valuable, even if in one sense they are relatively superficial. They may not form an impregnable barrier against war, but by slightly increasing the

obstacles in its way they do a little to increase the security which makes domination and resistance look less necessary. This is the justification of such endeavours as the League of Nations, however far they fall short of their original intentions.

Besides trying to erect political barriers against war, we must concern ourselves, far more than we do, with the complementary task of increasing people's attachment to peace. There are good reasons for thinking that war brings—or in its early stages seems to offer—certain compensations, the easing of certain strains, mainly unconscious. The psycho-analysts might be *totally* wrong in saying that people unconsciously want war. But it could still be true, as I believe, that unconsciously a vast number of people wouldn't mind a change from peace, a change from the unsatisfactory sort of peace that they know. Of these people it is true to say that they hate war more than they love peace. And what could be more natural? The social reformer quite rightly asks why they cannot be relieved from the discontents of an unsatisfactory peace-time existence without resort to war.

He will, of course, put his faith in changes at the conscious level and will to some extent be disappointed. Yet important progress can be made at that level, and whatever deeper factors may need considering the environmental difficulties are certainly real and cannot be neglected. Working life, for instance, with its implications for social life in general, is one of the very broad fields in which vast improvements could occur. The aridness of the actual operations in which many workers are engaged, and the disharmony of the social relationships amongst which their work often goes on, are not unavoidable features of industrial life. Industrial psychology has already done something, and could do vastly more, to remove them.

Much that is true of work applies equally to leisure, where up to the present still less has been done along psychological lines. Tremendous scope exists for increasing the true satisfactions gained from leisure pursuits among people of all social grades. It is unfortunate that the psychological studies that have been made of leisure—and the same is true of work—have largely been limited to the lower ranks of workers. Equally serious problems and equal scope for improvement exist in the upper economic levels. This is a point that must be returned to.

But to strengthen our opposition to war and our attachment to ' peace ' would not of itself bring us nearer to integrative social life. The most that could be achieved along these lines would be the acceptance of a supra-national authority which would tame the dominative principle and keep it under some degree of control. This would not give a radical peace organised on a different principle from dominative society. For an uncompromising eradication of war and quasi-war we have to aim at withdrawing the present universal sanction from the idea that domination and submission—or a mixture of the two in compromise—provide the only social pattern for the handling of differences.

How can this aim be achieved? The first recommendation must be an unpalatable one: that we should each as far as possible relinquish our own dominative attitudes. This conflicts with the natural preference, encouraged by our social structure, for setting to work dominatively to improve others:

> ' The first thing to do is to form the committees:
> ' The consultative councils, the standing committees, select committees and sub-committees.'

Moreover, our domination is largely beyond our conscious control and we cannot hope to carry out the recommendation at all thoroughly. It is like being advised ' Don't be neurotic!' The tendency cannot be dealt with by domination directed against ourselves, a fact that is bound to chagrin the dominative.[12] A great deal, none the less, is within our conscious control. Much can be done in the way of mapping our jealousies and observing where we give and where we expect deference; and where we ought to give, and where we can reasonably claim, respect. The difficulties do not exempt anyone from trying to be less dominative (or less submissive, according to his temperamental reaction to the pattern of domination and submission). To break the vicious circle of domination and submission at one point is probably as important as anything in the power of the individual person. The greater his social power, the more influence his achievement of integrative behaviour is likely to have.

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[12]This again is, I believe, one of the intuitions that Graham Howe expresses in *War Dance*.

But there is also ample scope for the more congenial activity of influencing others and altering institutions. Any institutional change that tends to increase economic security, to equalise opportunity, to gain respect for ability rather than dexterity in the practices of domination and deference, will contribute to psychological security. Such changes increase the possibility of integrative behaviour. They make the gradients of deference less steep and correspondingly increase the possibility of genuine mutual respect.

At this point, however, a very common misunderstanding may have arisen. Whenever economic and social reforms are mentioned it is assumed that they are primarily intended to make things better for the underdog. It is the natural assumption of people who are both patronising and guilty—the natural assumption of a dominative society which has glimmerings of social maturity. In connection with reforms aimed at eradicating war the assumption is particularly inept, since it is certainly not the underdog who has most say in deciding on war. The most important reforms—for the present purposes—are not those which aim at lifting the lowest classes to the economic, moral and hygienic level of the stratum above them, but those which could apply to the life of people of all classes. Insecurity and jealous, dominative safeguarding of one's status are found high up the scale of earned income. And many whose unearned economic security is beyond all question have equally intense anxieties over their status in other directions. An integrative texture of society cannot be achieved unless some way is found of relieving all classes of their insecurities, of freeing them from the anxious conviction that happiness depends on keeping a sufficient number of people below them on the gradient of deference.

The prevailing organisation by deference restricts those higher up the gradient almost as much in some ways (though of course not nearly so much in others) as it does those lower down. Choice of employment, for example, is seriously restricted for the children of the well-to-do. One of the very important functions of scientific vocational guidance is to persuade parents of good social standing to allow their child to take up the only sort of work he is suited to when its deference-value happens to be low. But many parents are far too insecure to accept advice of that sort.

Deference matters too much, and the idea that their son might lead a better life as a garage proprietor than as a solicitor is inconceivable to them. (Most parents, of course, never expose themselves to a scientific appraisement of their child's capacities.) Similarly a large number of lower middle class girls are dedicated from infancy to shorthand and typing and completely debarred from the factory work at which they might not only be happier but actually earn more. Indeed one of the small compensations of war is that it loosens restrictions on the employment of the well-to-do. Those of their children who are not particularly able can for the first time take up simple employment within their capacity without losing status.

With regard to leisure too, we may certainly doubt whether all that is needed are the familiar efforts of the culturally mediocre to impose their taste on those of lower income. In certain directions higher social grades could learn from lower. Gusto in spending, for instance, and the vivid interpretation of money in terms of the direct satisfactions it can bring are fairly usual among the very poor but almost beyond the capacity of the middle classes.

If this is true of work and leisure it applies still more clearly to the problems of intimate social life arising out of the relations between the sexes, between husbands and wives, between them and each other's families, between parents and children, between the children themselves within the home. The customs, conventions, and laws governing these relationships are capable of immense improvement, and the resultant easing of strains would be found at every economic level. Increased satisfactions derived from work and leisure, both in themselves and in their social setting, will not amount to very much unless they are accompanied by improvements in intimate social life as well. But here, more evidently than anywhere else, we soon reach the limits of what can be done by institutional changes and by good advice based on a simple conscious inspection of the problems. We are back at the point to which we were brought even by the less thorough-going attempts to avert war. Some attention must be given to factors that are outside ordinary conscious control.

It is the psychological structure of the family that does the most intimate and the least easily remedied damage to the individual. The diverse troubles that may arise from misfortunes

in the early family situation are of course outside the scope of this article. But certain general features of family organisation as we know it are highly relevant to the basic problem of insecurity and domination. It is on these features of family life that the work of Ian Suttie throws so much light.

One of his main themes is the tremendous importance of the mother's role and the difficulties which our present social order places in the way of her fulfilling it successfully. Without needing to consider the question from the standpoint of psychotherapy we can certainly agree, on general grounds, that the orthodox position of married women creates many psychological difficulties. The status of their work is far below that of their husband's occupation in the outside world. Housework and cooking, hard and wearisome as they may often be, are regarded as a routine which the woman more or less takes in her stride, and are no more to be remarked than the fact that she washes and dresses herself. Her work gives her practically none of the social contacts which are found in almost all men's work; and yet when she breaks off for gossip this is regarded (often by the woman herself) as a feminine weakness. Moreover it is implied that she is highly favoured by having this type of existence made possible for her: the man keeps her and shields her from the outer world. Himself he comes home creditably tired, to be fed and to claim implicit admiration for enduring the burden and heat of the day. Now there is naturally much to be said on the other side, and many women would shrink from any great change in this social order. An aggressively ' feminist ' viewpoint is likely to be just as unsatisfactory as the situation against which it protests.

Yet, as Suttie argues, a society which makes women the protégées of men, rather than their companions, produces serious psychological difficulties. In particular it means that enormous stress is placed on the woman's task of bearing and nurturing her children, a task in which even the most patriarchal society must give her pre-eminence. The result is that she tends to look to her children as the full meaning and justification of her life, and finds very intense satisfactions in the mutual emotional dependence between them and herself. This may have bad results in two directions. Firstly, the father is not nearly enough part of the family. Debarred by custom from much share in the care of the young child,

at home only for a short time, and then claiming attention which the mother might otherwise give the child, he is too plausibly cast for the role of interloper. One result of this, among others, is that the outside world of masculine activity, as represented by the father, becomes a disturbance to the psychological comfort of the home. The second danger is related to this. One of the most vital of the mother's functions, perhaps the most vital after simple physical care, is to lead the child into the world. The world should be a fascinating exercising ground for its capacities, including its social capacities. But all too commonly the growing child sees the mother and the home mainly as a refuge and a consolation to which he can return after the ordeal of contact with the outside world. The mother who produces this feeling in the child has failed dismally in one of her chief functions. The cause of her failure is that she herself has not found any great satisfactions in the outer world; the home has been her recompense for frustrations in other directions. The consequence is that she has become emotionally dependent on her children and cannot spontaneously and gladly carry out their emotional weaning from her.

In actual fact, of course, she is bound to carry out this weaning. And what commonly happens is that she does it with some degree of harsh embarrassment in order to do it at all in face of her own unconscious longings for a continuance of the old rapport. And for the child, of course, this means the conviction that the world can never be a tolerable place until one has learnt to be ' tough.' He (or she), in Suttie's words, ' holds up " toughness," aggressiveness, hardness, etc., as prime virtues . . . Obviously this state of mind is a *reaction* against the sentiments related to the mother and the nursery, from which (mentally) these children have just emerged, in all probability unwillingly. The suggestion arises that the whole of this character formation is a revenge upon and a repudiation of the " weaning " mother, on the defensive principle of " sour grapes." '

In some primitive cultures this difficulty is very much slighter than in ours (though in others it is worse). In these happier cultures, says Suttie,

> ' It seems to me that the child is able to reach maturity without developing anxieties, resentments, regressive longings for a

lost happier state, etc., and without having to immunize or insulate himself from tender feeling. Where the child has not been wounded by the refusal of love or by the rejection of its own, it does not need to develop a character "hard" and "cold," contemptuous of enthusiasms and incapable of loyalties; it does not develop a defensive inhibition of and unresponsiveness to feeling.

'Another important consequence follows. The undefended, unreserved character makes a far better parent. Not having any anxious regrets for lost childhood to repress (or not repressing them) such an adult has no aversion to children or embarrassment under their attention and appeals. He makes effective contact with children because he has a childlike or feminine mind. He makes a better parent. There need be no lack of strength, resolution or penetrative capacity in mind, he has merely not cut out what our culture teaches us to despise. Have we not mistaken a mere desertion or suppression of the open mindedness of childhood for maturation, manhood, and regarded this negative quality—a defensive reaction—as good in itself, very much as aggressiveness is idealized by Fascism?'

And the whole process leads paradoxically to what Suttie calls 'the taboo on tenderness.' His own words sum up the theme as well as any brief statement of a far-reaching idea could sum it up:

'My point is that the taboo on infantile activities, gratifications and relationships to mother, the condemnation of regression, spreads to harmless and even necessary feelings and attitudes of mind. It artificially differentiates men from women, making them bad comrades and throwing the woman back upon a dependency on their children, thus further widening the breach and aggravating jealousy. But its worst effects lie in separating parent from child. The former, unconsciously resisting and defending himself from regressive longings, is impatient with childishness and forces the child to grow up and to abandon its naïve, unguarded, emotional relationship to social environment. Such a parent, while denying the "right to childhood," presents to his children as the goal of life an adult nature and relationship which is unattractive to the child's mind or even productive of anxiety and depression. "If that is all maturity has to offer,"

we might imagine the child feeling, " I had better stay as I am and where I am." Thus a puritan intolerance of tenderness increases the unconscious regressiveness it hates, and interposes unnecessary moral obstacles in the way of the maturation it designs to accelerate. It forces development to proceed by a violent change with repression instead of by gradual process. It does not produce really mature minds, but merely a hardness and cynicism with a core of anxious, angry, infantility. It loses the generosity of the child without acquiring the stability and integration which should belong to the adult.'

Suttie's theme requires much further exposition than is possible here for its full implications to be seen. But enough has been said to suggest that our more intimate social life may well generate difficulties which greatly lessen the satisfactions of peace-time existence and which also help to reinforce the dominative pattern that finds its apotheosis in war. ' But all this is out of date,' protests the reader,—' we tried all this sex and emancipated child-rearing stuff in the nineteen-twenties. And it didn't get us anywhere.' The efforts of the nineteen-twenties were hampered by various misunderstandings. One (the result of Freudian influence) was that sex was thought to be of almost exclusive importance, sex regarded as a physical appetite. Other features of intimate social life are of equal importance. Again, it was too often felt as a matter of reproach that one suffered from repressions and unconscious confusions of attitude. It was imagined that one's own conscious effort (of ' emancipation ' or what not) could put matters right. Worse still, it was supposed than an enlightened outlook and a good text-book would enable any intelligent parents to bring up their children in a way that avoided neurotic troubles. To correct these misunderstandings two facts must constantly be insisted on. The first is the enormous difficulty of altering one's own psycho-pathological tendencies without help. The second is the almost equal difficulty of combining a clinical and a social relationship to the same person, adult or child. That is, it is exceedingly difficult to realise clinically what is happening to children whom you are also responsible for bringing up. It is not unknown for the children of psycho-therapists to be neurotic, and that fact should not surprise us. It must be insisted on that the intimate difficulties which contribute so much to

'the strains of peace' need actual treatment by specialised techniques, and not just good intentions combined with common sense. 'We got on all right without all this psycho-therapy in the past,' is the impulsive rejoinder, until we remember that it is the warring past that we hope to break with.

Apart from the need for further research (which all psychologists would agree in regarding as vital), it is the need for specialised treatment which the analysts chiefly insist on. Especially—and reasonably—they stress the value of child analysis. The difficulties of infancy cannot be entirely avoided, but they can be prevented from generating difficulties in adult life; by analysis in early childhood they can be got at arm's length and put into a proper perspective. 'If every child were psycho-analysed as a normal part of its education, we should almost certainly enjoy an incomparably more comfortable world.' (Money-Kyrle.) And at all events in the first generation of such a scheme the parents too would need analysis. The cost, argue the analysts, would be negligible compared with the cost of armaments.

Now such a proposal usually arouses deep suspicion and antagonism in the ordinary member of the public. The present attitude towards analysis and psycho-therapy in general is an exaggerated form of what people felt towards dentistry about a century ago. Jane Austen expressed it in a letter to her sister in 1813:

> 'The poor Girls and their Teeth!—I have not mentioned them yet, but we were a whole hour at Spence's, and Lizzy's were filed and lamented over again and poor Marianne had two taken out after all . . . Fanny's teeth were cleaned too—and pretty as they are, Spence found something to do to them, putting in gold and talking gravely and making a considerable point of seeing her again before winter;—he had before urged the expediency of L[izzy] and M[arianne]'s being brought to Town in the course of a couple of Months to be further examined, and continued to press for their all coming to him.—My B[rother] would not absolutely promise.—The little girls teeth I can suppose in a critical state, but I think he must be a Lover of Teeth and Money and Mischeif to parade about Fannys.—I would not have had him look at mine for a shilling a tooth and double it.'

We know now that this mistaken attitude not only prevented people at that time (and for long after) from getting such benefit as their contemporary dentists could give them, but also greatly delayed the improvement of dental techniques. Much the same is probably true of analysis and psycho-therapy to-day. Just as social reform has advanced beyond the stage of charitable aid for the completely crushed, so the social use of psycho-therapy needs to advance to conceptions of ensuring mental health rather than patching up the worst psychological breakdowns. To revert to the analogy of dentistry, we are in much the same stage, in the use we make of psycho-therapy, as were those who went to the dentist only when they got intolerable toothache. The imperfections in the practitioners' training and techniques are no good reason for not making all possible use of them. Admittedly there are still profound disagreements between the various schools of psycho-therapy over the technique of treatment. Even within the one school of Freudian analysis there are fundamental divergences of doctrine and practice in the psycho-analysis of children.[13] But so long as a technique is predominantly one of mental exploration rather than suggestion it is likely to be of value. At present, as with every profession in its early stages, thoroughly unsatisfactory practitioners are to be met with in all camps; but so are thoroughly good ones. We have to take the risk, just as earlier generations had with dentists.

Whatever progress might be made along these lines would be effective only if it were consolidated by improvements in ordinary political and social institutions. Neither our unconscious insecurities and confusions nor the obvious defects in the social and political machinery of our culture are responsible by themselves for the periodic collapse into war. They work together inseparably. Similarly they work together to produce the condition of aim-inhibited warfare which we call peace. It is the idea of returning to another interlude of that condition which desolates people who are secure enough to think beyond victory in the present war. For them, a radical examination of the notion of peace should precede their plans for planning.

D. W. HARDING.

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[13]Between Melanie Klein and Anna Freud.

# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT IN BEN JONSON

IN his essay on Jonson, Eliot says ' Jonson's drama is only incidentally satire . . it does not find its source in any precise emotional attitude or precise intellectual criticism of the actual world.'

In this brief sketch I shall attempt to indicate how an exactly contrary case can be made out for Jonson's drama—both comic and tragic—how a very precise and very forceful emotional and intellectual attitude towards the events of his story (and, thus, towards the ' actual world ') can be shown to be present in that drama, and present with a consistency so remarkable as to give force to my arguments.

Jonson's ' attitude ' is presented in his plays in different guises and in varying degrees of seriousness, but it is sufficiently clearly defined to be described with justification as his ' theme.'

This theme, what Jonson is concerned with in his drama, is what we may call ' spiritual modesty,' or the acknowledgment by the individual of his proper and ordained position in the universe. All the plays are ' satire ' in that they deal with persons from whom this acknowledgment, this modesty, is absent, and with the ambitions of these persons to exist in Brave New Worlds of some or other kind of Splendour, with their crime and their punishment. There is always this essential scheme of crime and punishment, and the crime is invariably of the same kind, though its gravity and the gravity of the punishment are hardly the same in any two plays. Jonson repeated his lesson without repeating himself.

Jonson's theme is always worked out with a complete sureness, a solidity of achievement, that makes his unpopularity (or, at least, the unpopularity of his best plays, the tragedies) barely comprehensible. Nor can I understand the accepted ' dulness '[1] of

[1]Or, as the *Cambridge History* brightly puts it: ' What most discourages the reader of Jonson is the absence of charm.'

these plays. As Eliot says, there are few lines which immediately strike one as great poetry, but this, in Jonson, implies, I think, not a general low level of ' inspiration,' but an unusually steady application of creative force at a more or less uniformly high level. To use the terms of poeticism, if there are no ' pearls five words long,' it is because Jonson ' loaded every rift with ore,' a more substantial form of beauty.[2]

The plays I have chosen to deal with are *The Devil is an Ass,* the two important comedies, *Volpone* and *The Alchemist,* and the two tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline.* Examined in this light and in this order, they will be seen to form a dramatic sequence which unmistakeably gives Jonson his place as our second dramatist. For though he may not have written a play as good as *Dr. Faustus,* he must finally be placed above Marlowe by a comparison of their total outputs.

A very brief survey of the plays other than those I have named is sufficient to show that they too belong to the general scheme—the scheme that was Jonson's philosophy of life—his deep-rooted and energetic belief in modesty, moderation, a categorical ' norm ' in matters social and religious. Consider *Bartholomew Fair*: though a frivolous play, it is, in the sense I am trying to make clear, Jonsonian. The crimes (if one can use that word in this connection) resulting from spiritual and physical bravado are all very slight, and the appropriate punishment is only for certain characters to be shamed in the eyes of themselves and others—shamed *en masse,* in the manner of the farce.

Nothing need be said of the Humour plays, but they are interesting as the lowest rung in the ladder by which Jonson reached the superb expression of his moral philosophy in the Roman tragedies. The ' Humour,' or the ' Character,' is the most obvious, most elementary form for satirical treatment of any kind of fanaticism or ' enthusiasm.'

But *The Devil is an Ass* warrants a more careful attention. Though making no pretension to the status of *Volpone* and *The Alchemist,* it has its place in an account of Jonson's work. The question of that modesty which is manifest in a natural decent

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[2]Though there are many phrases such as ' the witty gluttony of a meal.'

behaviour conforming with the demands of God and Man, is dealt with at a much less interesting level—it is here only the bare bones embodied in a very slight story. Fitzdottrel, the main figure, is merely weak-minded; his ambitions are firstly to be a great lord, and secondly to meet the devil. In his foolish attempts to rise to the vaguely grandiloquent position of ' Duke of Drown'd Lands ' he comes near to ruining himself. But he is not engaged in any profound sinning (such as that of Sejanus and Catiline) or even in any deeply anti-social behaviour (as is Volpone): his sin is really only his own shame. And so the play falls between the great comedies and *Bartholomew Fair*—neither as serious as the former nor as single-mindedly farcically as the latter.

The play's particular kind of success is achieved, not by any kind of profundity or subtlety, but by poster-paintings of Fitzdottrell's folly, the shady goings-on of the Projector, and the corruption of society in general. This large vividness of portrayal of Fitzdottrell and the Projector and his colleagues is cleverly effected by the introduction of Pug, a minor devil. Pug comes to earth with the zealous intention of promoting evil, but he finds that his ideas of good and evil are superannuated. Mankind isn't interested any longer in the old naïve wickedness—Sin is now a recognised social art; the ladies change Pug's name to De-Vile because that has a smarter ring about it:

> You talk of a university! why, hell is
> A grammar school to this . . .
> My days in hell were holidays to this.

Eventually, having made one pitiful attempt at lechery and, by a petty maliciousness which in that company wears the appearance of virtue, prevented what might have been a ' deed of darkness,' Pug finds himself in gaol on a charge of stealing clothes and has to be rescued by Satan himself.

Fitzdottrell is an example of the man who, with the ' big ideas ' characteristic of Jonson's main figure, is nothing more than a fool and a rather unpleasant one (Sir Epicure Mammon, in *The Alchemist*, is a fool, too, but rather a noble one), and it is only through the intervention of the more responsible characters, Wittipol and Manly, that he is saved from the machinations of the Projector. This latter is a creation in the best Jonsonian satiric-ludicrous style:

> My plot for reformation of these, follows:
> To have all tooth-picks brought into an office,
> There seal'd; and such as counterfeit them, mulcted.
> And last, for venting them, to have a book
> Printed, to teach their use . . .

The economic capitalism of the era was the nearest and most outstanding example of the extravagant assertion of the individual self against which Jonson's indignation is always directed.[3] But, sincere though his tirades against this new race of money-makers undoubtedly are, the self-assertion of such men is mere schoolboy uppishness when compared with the sublime egotism of Catiline, who would bend to his will not simply gold, but Rome itself and all that Rome was symbol for.

At the end of the play Fitzdottrell is left to his own reflections, the tone of which indicate that the lesson has been learned:

> My land is drown'd indeed.

And the play concludes on a mild forgiving note far removed from the helter-skelter of what has gone before:

> It is not manly to take joy or pride
> In human errors: we do all ill things;
> They do them worst that love them, and dwell there,
> Till the plague comes. The few that have the seeds
> Of goodness left, will sooner make their way
> To a true life, by shame, than punishment.

Before passing on from *The Devil,* something should be said concerning the frequent references in these plays to ' fucus ' and allied subjects. In *The Devil,* Lady Tailbush intrigues to obtain for herself the monopoly of a new kind of ' fucus.' There are several impressive catalogues:

> Your allum scagliola, or pol de pedra;
> And zuccarino; turpentine of Abezzo,
> Wash'd in nine waters: soda di levante,
> Or your fern ashes . . .

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[3]See L. C. Knights' essay *Tradition and Ben Jonson,* in *Scrutiny* for September, 1935.

' Fucus ' recurs in *Volpone* (the mountebank scene and Lady Would-be), *Sejanus* (the Livia—Eudemus scene), and *Catiline* (the Fulvia—Sempronia scene):

> A lady cannot be
> Too curious of her form, that still would hold
> The heart of such a person . . . (*Sejanus*)

These scenes have an obvious significance. They fit in so perfectly in Jonson's pointing of his moral: the faces of these ladies are, one knows, ' ulcerous ' as well as ' anointed.' Such associations of hypocrisy, artificiality, immodesty and fundamental ugliness are of immediately apparent importance in the worlds of *Sejanus* and *Catiline;* and the suffocating atmosphere of tawdriness that clings round such scenes is further thickened by the references to ' tuft-taffeta ' and silken gowns—Jonson is taking no simple delight in such things—they are ' th' adulteries of art ' which must always predominate in the lives of the immoderately ' individualistic ' and the violently ' self-made.'

Turning to *Volpone* and *The Alchemist* one finds such a close parallel between them that it is most convenient to consider them alongside each other.

The introduction to the plays in the Oxford Edition places *The Alchemist* above *Volpone,* mainly because (so it says) whereas *Volpone* is alien to the Venetian society he is placed in, Subtle is a ' growth of the soil ' of London. I don't think that Volpone strikes the reader as being particularly *alien* to his environment (though he is *different,* as we shall see), any more than the society draws particular attention to itself as being Venetian. And to say that Subtle is ' far more intelligible ' than Volpone is to betray one's total ignorance of the point of Volpone and, therefore, of the play, and, as a consequence, of Ben Jonson.

In any case, Volpone is such a significant figure in his play and Subtle so (comparatively) unimportant in his, that it seems peculiarly futile to appraise the two comedies by weighing the two characters one against the other.

I think *Volpone* is by far the greater play of the two. *The Alchemist* has not the fine unity of this play, it has no such commanding figure as the Fox to hold it together. The end, where Lovewit comes along and quite irresponsibly snaps up Dame Pliant

from under Surly's nose (Surly is a very half-hearted character altogether) and even more irresponsibly turns a blind eye to Face's misbehaviour, is not far above the level of *Bartholomew Fair*. It will not bear comparison with the end of *Volpone*.

I think that Subtle and his colleagues recede into the background if the play is viewed in its correct perspective. It is Sir Epicure Mammon who is the important figure in *The Alchemist*. This is not prevented by his being the gull rather than the guller (for Volpone, too, is the gull of his own bravado). Indeed, Sir Epicure and Volpone are very similar up to a point: they both have Magnificent Longings—they both desire to live at what they consider the most intense, the grandest, level possible to man. The Fox says:

> What should I do,
> But cocker up my genius, and live free
> To all delights my fortune calls me to?

And Sir Epicure Mammon is an epicure rather than a mammonite:

> . . . and then renew
> Our youth and strength with drinking the elixir,
> And so enjoy a perpetuity
> Of life and lust!

The way of life at which they are aiming is a wholesale 'uninhibited' assertion of the self at the expense of all social and religious conventions. This assertion is manifested in two main forms: firstly, the glorification of wealth, secondly, physical desire of somewhat gargantuan proportions. But their regard for money is not that of the miser (' You know the use of riches '): they both stand out against avarice (which assembles wealth but will not apply it) as represented by the evil trio of *Volpone*, Corbaccio, Corvino and Voltore.

Volpone is clearly distinguished from these latter:

> Dear saint,
> Riches, the dumb god, that giv'st all men tongues,
> Thou can'st do nought, and yet mak'st men do all things . . .
> . . . Thou art virtue, fame,

> Honour, and all things else. Who can get thee,
> He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise.

He represents something altogether different, something which though Jonson is ' boosting ' it at the expense of the Corbaccio group, he is at the same time exposing. Similarly, in *The Alchemist*, Sir Epicure's conceit is evinced in a glorious philanthropy which, however, is presented as something undeniably ridiculous:

> He would have built
> The city new, and made a ditch about it
> Of silver, should have run with cream from Hogsden;
> That every Sunday, in Moorfields, the younkers,
> And tits and tom-boys should have fed on, gratis.

Riches are to enable them to live as ' complete men.'

The second particular, the excesses of the flesh, is worked out in a superb manner. The whole nature of Volpone's arrogance is displayed in the scene with Celia:

> See, behold,
> What thou art queen of; . . .
> See, a carbuncle,
> May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark . . .
> A gem but worth a private patrimony
> Is nothing: we will eat such at a meal.
> The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
> The brains of peacocks, and of estriches,
> Shall be our food . . . etc.

And the next speech:

> Thy baths shall be the juice of July-flowers,
> Spirit of roses, and of violets,
> The milk of unicorns, and panthers' breath
> Gather'd in bags, and mixed with Cretan wines.

Compare this with Sir Epicure's courting scene:

> When thy name is mentioned,
> Queens may look pale; and we but showing our love,
> Nero's Poppaea may be lost in story!

> . . . we will eat our mullets,
> Soused in high-country wines, sup pheasant's eggs,
> And have our cockles boiled in silver shells . . .

Only Volpone and Sir Epicure speak this kind of magnificent poetry—the motive force of which re-appears later, as we shall see, in the shape of the ' horror ' poetry of Sejanus and Catiline. By the side of these two, the other characters are sordid or dull.

But Jonson is not just blowing up these gaudy balloons, he is at the same time pricking them. Consider this speech, from the Celia scene in *Volpone*:

> Whil'st we, in changed shapes act Ovid's tales,
> Though, like Europa now, and I like Jove,
> Then I like Mars, and thou like Erycine . . .
> Then will I have thee in more modern forms,
> Attired like some sprightly dame of France,
> Brave Tuscan lady, or proud Spanish beauty . . .
> Or some quick Negro, or cold Russian;
> And I will meet thee in as many shapes:
> Where we may so transfuse our wandering souls
> Out at our lips, and score up sums of pleasures.

To the modern reader these sentiments have the authentic ring of the pathologist's case-book about them—Volpone's ' glory,' his sensual magnificence, his straining after grand effects, has ended in a niggling ingenuity which betrays the essential falsity of his ambitions. What should have been passion ends in prurience, and what was intended for eroticism turns into exoticism.

For though Volpone seeks to raise himself into a world far above that of the corrupt mean Venetians, he does no more than change their ignoble existence for a lurid Lives of the Olympians *à la* Hollywood. His emotions and thoughts are essentially the same as theirs, but they hide theirs under a veneer of respectability and normality, while he drags his out, gives them an extra coat of red paint and then flaunts them in the miserable dirty face of Venice. His appetite for love, like his appetite for food, is betrayed by its garnishings.

As I remarked, there is a certain correspondence between the figures of Volpone and Sir Epicure throughout the plays, but, like

that between Sejanus and Catiline, it is a correspondence which finally gives way to an essential dichotomy. Here, roughly speaking, it is the distinction between criminal and fool.

Thus Volpone, in his love-making, finishes by attempting to rape the chaste and married Celia, while Sir Epicure courts Dol Common of the ' Medici forehead,' who finally simulates a mad fit and reduces him to confusion. And, in the end, Volpone reaps the reward of his crime:

> This is call'd mortifying of a Fox.

And Sir Epicure reaps the reward of his folly:

> I will go mount a turnip cart, and preach
> The end of the world, within these two months.

Their phantasy worlds have been exploded, and they both retire characteristically.

*Volpone* is the more serious, the better play; it is a higher type of comedy. Indeed, Volpone himself approaches near the Tragic Heroes (or Villains) of the Roman plays. Unlike them, he has no serious antagonist.

At this point it is most useful to move on to the tragedies, in which the Jonsonian theme is worked out in a manner essentially more serious than the manner of *Volpone*.

*Sejanus* is best considered as a kind of prelude to *Catiline*. The characters of the play separate into four groups—Sejanus, Tiberius, Arruntius and his friends, and, lastly, the servile senate and the common people of Rome. The scene is decadent Rome, in the reign of Tiberius, and the play at its beginning plunges us into the political intrigues, corruption and vice of the time. Arruntius, who with Lepidus represents honourable Rome and acts as a kind of chorus throughout the play, speaks:

> Times! the men,
> The men are not the same: 'tis we are base,
> Poor, and degenerate from the exalted strain
> Of our great fathers . . .
> There's nothing Roman in us; nothing good,
> Gallant, or great . . .

Sejanus, the arch intriguer, then enters:

> He is now the court god . . .

Sejanus is ambitious to the exclusion of all virtue whatever; he worships only one god—Fortune—there are for him, that is to say, no moral values. Sejanus is just Sejanus, a man whose fate it is to be great and all of whose activities must be directed towards that end, towards the goal of greatness, irrespective of whether or not they are, as activities, moral.

At the opposite pole is Arruntius, the chorus: the moral man who accepts the gods as the supreme powers, moral arbiters ultimately rewarding the good and punishing the evil. Fortune, being a man-made god, is not one of these powers.

The two attitudes are continually present throughout the play. The chorus cannot be described as merely denunciatory: Arruntius's denunciations themselves more than imply positive values.

Consider, firstly, Sejanus:

> Adultery! it is the lightest ill
> I will commit. A race of wicked acts
> Shall flow out of my anger . . .
> Laugh at the idle terrors; tell proud Jove,
> Between his power and thine there is no odds:
> 'Twas only fear first in the world made gods.

When smoke is discovered pouring from Sejanus's statue, and, on removing the head, a ' great and monstrous ' serpent leaps out, Sejanus alone refuses to interpret it as an evil omen: the gods, he considers, are quite impotent as regards the course of his career:

> O, superstition! . . .
> What excellent fools
> Religion makes of men!

Sejanus fully intends to follow his star: he would regard moral behaviour (using the word in Arruntius's sense) on his part during the present situation as the greatest immorality (measured by his ' code '):

> While thus your thought unto a mean is tied,
> You neither dare enough, nor do provide.
> All modesty is false.

He is the beloved child of Fortune: she has smiled on him so long that he sees no reason for supposing she may ever betray him. At any rate, Fortune is all that matters, and if Sejanus should fail, no one is to blame (Sejanus least of all) except Fortune:

> Yet, why is now my thought turn'd toward death,
> Whom Fates have let go on, so far in breath,
> Uncheck'd or unreproved . . .
> If you will, Destinies, that after all,
> I faint now ere I touch my period,
> You are but cruel . . .

Sejanus does not neglect the gods, he takes a delight in flouting them:

> Swell, swell, my joys; and faint not to declare
> Yourselves as ample as your causes are . . .
> My roof receives me not; 'tis air I tread:
> And, at each step, I feel my advanced head
> Knock out a star in heaven! . . .[4]
> It is our grief, and will be our loss, to know
> Our power shall want opposites; unless
> The gods, by mixing in the cause, would bless
> Our fortunes with their conquest . . .

Here once more is the Jonsonian superbia (' See, behold, What thou art queen of . . .', ' We shall be brave, Puffe, now we have the med'cine . . .', etc.), but here it appears in a more serious aspect—it has become, not the breaking of social customs, but downright defiance of established religion, of the gods. In Jonson's drama, the misers, or Volpone, do not merely offend against what

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[4]This star image is common in Jonson—and is always used in the same connection, *e.g. The Alchemist*:

> When the jewels
> Of twenty states adorn thee, and the light
> Strike out the stars!

and *Catiline*:

> . . . my emergent fortune once more look
> Above the main; which now shall hit the stars . . .

L. C. Knights has called the 'anti-acquisitive attitude,' or social laws—this offence is related back to the deeper offence against religious morality. But the difference between *Volpone* and *Sejanus* is that in the latter Jonson has gone straight, directly, to the deeper, more fundamental offence—and he has presented the problem as more clearly, more starkly, *that*. *Volpone* is a great comedy, *Sejanus* a great tragedy.

The contrast with Sejanus is provided, as I have said, by Arruntius and Lepidus, the men of honour. These two are, thus, of particular importance; they take little part in the action, they do not even suffer for their opinions:

> We are no guilty men, and then no great;
> . . . We stand not in the lines that do advance
> To that so courted point.

They stand by and comment on the important scenes. Arruntius's belief and unbelief and Sejanus's unbelief and belief are, so to speak, counterpointed.

In addition to standing in opposition to Sejanus's philosophy, these few friends serve to emphasize, by their bitter remarks, the servility of the senate and the generally debilitated condition of Rome, as well as the hypocrisy and lesser wickedness of the Emperor Tiberius.[5] Tiberius falls between two stools; he is not so outrageous as Sejanus, but, on the other hand, neither is he in the least creditable. Arruntius and Lepidus make us well aware of his dissipated life:

> . . . dead to virtue, he permits himself
> Be carried like a pitcher by the ears,
> To every act of vice . . .

The Emperor does not wish temples to be erected to him. He modestly disclaims equality with the gods—but only in order to provoke greater compliments. He is very coy about it all:

> We must make up our ears 'gainst these assaults
> Of charming tongues; we pray you use no more
> These contumelies to us . . .

[5]See Act 1, Scene 2; Act 3, Scene 1; Act 5, Scene 10.

He doesn't set himself up against the gods—he just assumes that they naturally identify themselves with him:

> As if there were that chaos bred in things,
> That laws and liberty would not rather choose
> To be broken, and ta'en by us
> Than have the strain to be preserved by such.

The problem he sets Arruntius, Lepidus and the others is whether or not he is to be honoured and obeyed:

> Lepidus: . . . he is our prince.
> Arruntius: He is our monster: forfeited to vice . . .
> An emperor, only in his lusts.

Their final attitude to Tiberius is that he is at least preferable to Sejanus. Being emperor, he cannot be obsessed with Sejanus's deadly ambitions. But Jonson definitely 'places' him.

To return to the Arruntius group: Silius, falsely accused by one of Sejanus's minions, bursts out:

> O, you equal gods,
> Whose justice not a world of wolf-turn'd men
> Shall make me to accuse, howe'er provoked;
> Have I for this so oft engaged myself?

The 'good' Romans, while unable to conceive how the gods can refrain from immediately destroying Sejanus, nevertheless do not loose faith in their justice. Similar is Arruntius's speech:

> Still dost thou suffer, heaven! . . .
> Jove, will nothing wake thee? . . .
> Well! snore on, dreaming gods,
> And let this last of that proud giant-race
> Heave mountain upon mountain, 'gainst your state—
> Be good unto me, Fortune and you powers,
> Whom I, expostulating, have profaned . . .

Here Arruntius is making the antithesis between Fortune, the substitute-god, and the gods proper, which is also the antithesis between himself and his friends and Sejanus's party. With rhetorical irony, Arruntius renounces Jove and the 'dreaming gods,' and calls on Sejanus's god to support him. His sincerity

is being put to the test.

But his doubts are resolved, his trust in supernatural justice is vindicated: Sejanus, his fortune turned, is executed and his body torn to pieces by the mob, who are by now characteristically lamenting the fact that they can't stick Sejanus together again:

> Who would trust slippery chance? . . .
> Fortune, thou had'st no deity, if men
> Had wisdom . . .

The common people of Rome, too, really worship only Fortune—in the guise of immediate, temporary, prosperity. They have no moral sense in that they cheer whomsoever is in favour at the moment, or whom they consider the 'coming man,' and revile whomsoever is out of favour. Thus Sejanus, in being treated in this way at the hands of the mob, is all the more thoroughly betrayed by the quasi-god he has so consistently worshipped:

> O violent change,
> And whirl of men's affections!
> Like as both
> Their bulks and souls were bound on Fortune's wheel,
> And must act only with her motion.

The play concludes with a little homily:

> Let this example move the insolent man,
> Not to grow proud and careless of the gods . . .
> For, whom the morning saw so great and high,
> Thus low and little, 'fore the even doth lie.

Having given the plays the kind of attention I have suggested, one may turn to *Catiline* with more chance of understanding the play's greatness. And with less chance of believing that—to quote Eliot—'the merit which *Catiline* possesses is the same merit that is exhibited more triumphantly in *Volpone*.' The 'ideas,' the intellectual foundations, of *Catiline* are the same in kind as those of *Volpone*, but it is in the tragedy that they are presented in the artistically more triumphant manner. They are employed, and presented, on a higher level of art: I think it is a genuine, not a Pyrrhic, victory.

The opening is very fine:

*A Room in Catiline's House.*

*The Ghost of Sylla rises.*

Dost thou not feel me, Rome? not yet! is night
So heavy on thee, and my weight so light? . . .
Shake not the frighted heads
Of thy steep towers, or shrink to their first beds? . . .
Behold, I come, sent from the Stygian sound,
As a dire vapour that had cleft the ground.
To ingender with the night, and blast the day;
Or like a pestilence that should display
Infection through the world: which thus I do—

(*The curtain draws, and Catiline is discovered in his study.*)

Pluto be at thy counsels, and into
Thy darker bosom enter Sylla's spirit!
All that was mine, and bad, thy breast inherit.
Alas, how weak is that for Catiline! . . .
fate will have thee pursue
Deeds, after which no mischief can be new;
The ruin of thy country: thou wert built
For such a work, and born for no less guilt . . .
(*Sinks*)

*Catiline rises, and comes forward.*

It is decreed: nor shall thy fate, O Rome,
Resist my vow . . .
I feel
A spirit within me chides my sluggish hands,
And says, they have been innocent too long . . .

The building-up of the 'horror' atmosphere needs careful examination: there is the Ghost of Sylla, there are the various portents, there is the drinking of the slave's blood. But these gigantic terrors are followed closely by a very different kind of thing—by significant petty sordidnesses, such as the ugly episode of the 'somewhat modest' page. The villains of the piece are painted in the whole: and Catiline's colleagues are not of the 'revolutionary idealist' type.

The two Roman tragedies have obvious similarities: Sejanus plots to depose Tiberius from power, and Catiline plots to overthrow the government of the senate. But the situation in *Catiline*, the later play, is very far from redundant—there is a difference which dwarfs the similarities: Sejanus's ambition is to form a new Rome, himself as builder, whereas Catiline's ambition is to destroy Rome, himself as destroyer.

The ' immodesty,' the bravado, of Sejanus is easily comprehended: it is described quite simply by the word ' ambition ' used in its common sense. But the insolence of Catiline is quite another kind of ambition—not the simple wish to get on in the world, to obtain power in the machinery of government—it is that terrible assertion of the self which can manifest itself only in wholesale slaughter and destruction. The key-note is: ' By public ruin, private spirits must rise.' Catiline can live only by overthrowing Life.

Sejanus mocks at the gods, at Arruntius's way of life, but he does believe in Fortune, in (that is to say) Life on the highest possible plane of worldly omnipotence, but Catiline believes in death and destruction and nothing else: the pursuit of these constitutes for him the highest plane of existence. Thus Sejanus is a simpler character than Catiline, for Catiline's interest in evil does not have its origin in any more or less simple lust for power: his devilry is ' pure ' devilry. This is the same egotism we find in Volpone and Sejanus, but magnified and turned upside-down, and, therefore, more inhuman, unnatural and terrible:[6]

> That I could reach the axle, where the pins are
> Which bolt this frame; that I might pull them out,
> And pluck all into Chaos, with myself!

Thus Catiline's crime, being so without Sejanus's motives, is a greater crime. Sejanus flouts the gods—but in a rather childish way

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[6]He uses the catch-word ' Freedom ' as a cloak for his activities—' Freedom we all stand for '—but this is just as unreal as the monarchy he offers Lentulus and the provinces he promises the other conspirators. He pretends to be these men's servants, to be disinterestedly intent on winning them their rights, but behind their backs he talks contemptuously of their ' mere ambition.'

(and he does sacrifice to Fortune and then loses his temper when she fails to respond favourably); Catiline, however, ignores the gods altogether, a deadlier insult, and at the same time, in his desire to destroy Rome, is setting himself (not Fortune, but himself) up as more powerful than the gods. For Rome—and this is of the utmost importance—has, in this play, a symbolic significance: it stands for all that is good, holy, and ordained by the true gods. Petreius, the Roman general, in this way exorts his soldiers before they enter the battle against Catiline:

> The quarrel is not now of fame, of tribute . . .
> But for your own republic,
> For the raised temples of the immortal gods,
> For all your fortunes, altars, and your fires,
> For the dear souls of your loved wives and children,
> Your parents' tombs, your rites, laws, liberty,
> And, briefly, for the safety of the world . . .

And Cicero, impressing upon the senate the awfulness of what might have happened, says:

> Lay but the thought of it before you, fathers,
> Think but with me you saw this glorious city,
> The light of all the earth, tower of all nations,
> Suddenly falling in one flame!

Clearly, Rome is not just a city: it is given a religious significance. This play does, therefore, go further than *Sejanus*. Sejanus's intentions are evil, but Catiline's are overwhelmingly diabolic. Sejanus disobeys the gods in attempting to take into his hands the control of Rome, but Catiline actively opposes them, fights them, in attempting to lay waste Rome, the city peculiar to the gods: 'that commonwealth which they have founded With so much labour, and like care have kept, Now near seven hundred years.' Rome becomes identified with the gods, with Good.

What punishment is adequate to such a crime? This question is successfully solved. Catiline is killed—but he is not merely killed. The enormity of his offence, its heinousness and also its hopelessness, its impossibility, the calamity (for Catiline) it is bound to end in, are all finely depicted in the great accusatory speech of Cicero (whose function is similar to Arruntius's in *Sejanus*, but is more successfully developed and emphasized):

We have that law still, Catiline, for thee;
An act as grave as sharp; the state's not wanting . . .
I have those eyes and ears shall still keep guard,
And spial on thee, as they've ever done,
And thou not feel it. What then can'st thou hope? . .
Thou dost nothing, Sergius,
Thou can'st endeavour nothing, nay, not think,
But I both see and hear it . . .
What is there here in Rome, that can delight thee?
Where not a soul, outside thine own foul knot,
But fears and hates thee . . .

Catiline is condemned to this death in life before he is finally dispatched (as what seems an act of mercy) from life. He is first cut off from intercourse with mankind, and then, in the battlefield, he dies confronted with that which he had hoped to annihilate:

So Catiline, at the sight of Rome in us,
Became his tomb.

Rome is the Medusa's head: that is, the gods have exerted their power.

The play ends on a subdued, 'classical' note, characteristic of Jonson's conclusions:

. . . my conscience,
Which I must always study before fame.
Though both be good, the latter yet is worst,
And ever is ill got, without the first.

*Catiline* is the culmination of the Jonsonian cycle.

Though, in a study as brief as this, it is not possible to set forth the whole extent of Jonson's greatness as a dramatist, I have, I hope, indicated in some way the nature of that greatness.

A fitting conclusion is this passage from *Catiline*, which serves at once for an appropriate eulogy of Jonson and a concise statement of his 'message':

How easy is a noble spirit discern'd
From harsh and sulphurous matter, that flies out
In contumelies, makes a noise and stinks!
May we find good and great men: that know how
To stoop to wants and meet necessities . . .

D. J. Enright.

# POSTSCRIPT ON VERLAINE

## I.

FEW modern French poets have been more popular or more widely read in this country than Verlaine. Nor is it altogether surprising that recognition by English critics actually preceded recognition in his own country. To the English critics of the last decade of the nineteenth century the down-at-heels poet scribbling immortal verses in Paris cafés with the eternal glass of absinthe at his elbow, the shabby and rapacious mistresses hovering in the background ready to snatch the poem from under his pen and sell it to Vanier for a few francs, was an extremely sympathetic figure.

The poetry was no less attractive to them than the man whose personality it faithfully reflected. It was singularly free from the things that make French poetry difficult for many English readers. Its melody appealed to an ear which found the alexandrine ' monotonous '; it was vague, flexible and suggestive where French verse sometimes seemed to English readers to be rigid, precise and ' unpoetical.' The language showed the familiar impress of the Romantic Movement. The words were so highly charged with poetical associations that the poetry appeared to consist in the skilful manipulation of counters. The *langueur,* the violins and the tears, which are plentiful in Verlaine's poetry, were all part of the nineteenth-century poet's stock-in-trade and they were very much to the taste of his English critics. His work also gave them the pleasant sensation of revolt against establshed conventions without disturbing their fundamental complacency. In short, the transition from Shelley to Verlaine was an easy one; he was the natural bridge between English and French poetry. In a way he still is, and some of us may remember with gratitude that it was a few well-thumbed anthology pieces in those little books of French verse which used to appear on the syllabus of the Higher Certificate that provided us with an introduction to French poetry and became the prelude to better things.

These qualities, however, are less attractive to-day than they were at the close of the century and it seems at first surprising to

find Remy de Gourmont describing Verlaine as the *renovateur du sentiment poétique*. The celebrated *Chanson d'automne* has not worn well and now seems to illustrate all the characteristic vices of Verlaine's style. We are perhaps inclined to overlook the peculiar excellence of

> . . . quand
> Sonne l'heure

when for a moment a deeper note makes itself heard above the flutter of dead leaves and the scraping of the violins. For the more we read Verlaine, the clearer it becomes that he cannot be dismissed as a mere late nineteenth-century lyric poet. Even in his early work there is a conflict (well illustrated by the *Chanson d'automne*) between the artificial poetic sentiment of his time and something fresher and more direct. In spite of its clichés and its poetic language, his best poetry possesses a personal accent which was almost unique in his own century. The poet who wrote:

> La lune blanche
> Luit dans les bois;
> De chaque branche
> Part une voix
> Sous la ramée . . .
> O bien aimée
>
> L'étang reflète,
> Profond miroir,
> La silhouette
> Du saule noir
> Où le vent pleure . . .
>
> Rêvons, c'est l'heure.
>
> Un vaste et tendre
> Apaisement
> Semble descendre
> Du firmament
> Que l'astre irise . . .
>
> C'est l'heure exquise

may have affinities with nineteenth-century romanticism, but his

affinities with the anonymous writers of the middle ages (who used an almost identical verse-form) are still more pronounced. Verlaine's Bohemianism and his once inexplicable refusal to be treated as a *chef d'école* by his younger contemporaries were not entirely due to personal eccentricity. The nineteenth-century trappings concealed, and nearly succeeded in stifling, a genuine folk-poet, a direct descendant of an almost extinct race. It was because he belonged, properly speaking, to a line that was anterior to literary nationalism that his verse appeals so directly to English as well as to French readers.

Mr. Harold Nicolson has said that

> 'The actual statement which Verlaine allows himself is but on the fringe of his real feelings, and behind it stretches a vast and shadowy hinterland.'

It would not be easy to find a better description of the folk-poets or of Verlaine's best work. When he wrote:

> Le ciel est, par-dessus le toit,
> Si bleu, si calme!
> Un arbre, par-dessus le toit,
> Berce sa palme.
>
> La cloche, dans le ciel qu'on voit,
> Doucement tinte.
> Un oiseau sur l'arbre qu'on voit
> Chante sa plainte

he appeals to something which is common to the whole race and does not belong specifically to any one nation. The bird on its tree is familiar in medieval lyrics. Verlaine's bird is a real bird; it is not a stuffed bird from the nineteenth-century collections uttering discordant squeaks in a painted forest. Its *plainte* speaks directly to those primitive, inarticulate feelings which lie buried beneath the conventions of civilisation.

## II.

Although some of Verlaine's critics have been conscious of the folk-element in his poetry, it is not as a folk-poet but as a modern poet with a subtle insight into human feelings that he is usually

praised. François Coppée, for example, hailed him as the inventor of a new poetry *toute en nuances, évocatrice des plus délicates vibrations des nerfs, des plus fugitifs échos du coeur.* It was only as an afterthought that he added, a little uncertainly, *une poésie naturelle cependant, jaille de source parfois méme presque populaire.*

This view is worth examining not only because it is widely held, but also because the claim that it makes is implicit in Verlaine's poetry. I think that it can be said at once that the critic's hesitation and his evident anxiety to link the folk-poet and the modern poet underline one of the most serious weaknesses of Verlaine's poetry. The experience of the race is never stationary; it is constantly shifting, changing, developing. The accent never falls in exactly the same place. Verlaine's experience was genuine but limited. His sensibility was incapable of assimilating the new experiences that are evolved by the race as a whole in the course of its development. He did not possess the toughness and vitality that enabled Corbière to achieve a fusion of the folk-elements and the new complexity in his magnificent *Rapsode foraine.* For this reason the folk-poet and what his critics call the modern poet remain separate and distinct and the primitive, inarticulate feelings of which he was sometimes the mouthpiece seem strangely remote from the life of his own time.

Although Verlaine's attempts to become a modern poet sometimes led him into unprofitable ways, his failures are of considerable interest to the literary critic. When Baudelaire writes:

> Quand tu vas balayant l'air de ta jupe large,
> Tu fais l'effet d'un beau vaisseau qui prend le large,
> Chargé de toile, et va roulant
> Suivant un rhythme doux, et paresseux, et lent.
>
> . . .
>
> Ta gorge qui s'avance et qui pousse la moire,
> Ta gorge triomphante est une belle armoire
> Dont les panneaux bombés et clairs
> Comme les boucliers accrochent des éclairs

he invests the movement of a skirt and the curve of a throat with an intense *moral* significance. They are both erotic symbols; but the

skirt suggests the ship and the open sea which offer the poet an escape from the oppressive desires that crowd in upon him; the 'triumphant throat' reminds him of the serried ranks of the warriors' shields which break down all resistance. The feelings described by Baudelaire are seen in their true perspective. Huge vistas of sin and suffering open before us.

When Verlaine turns his attention to a similar theme, the contrast is complete:

> Quand Elle s'en vient devers le lit,
> L'orgueil des beaux seins cambrés emplit
> Et bombe le linge parfumé
> Du seul vrai parfum, son corps pâmé.

The symbols are purely erotic symbols. They suggest immediate and violent pleasure and nothing more. A great poet like Baudelaire sets his own imprint on words and gives them a peculiar individuality. Verlaine seems to rob them of all individuality, to bring out what is common in them in a bad sense, and his experience degenerates into a coarse and vulgar sensuality. He does not evoke a scheme of values, as Baudelaire does, because for him it does not exist. He is content to register sensation passively where the great poet achieves a critical ordering of emotion.

I think that with these examples in front of us we must conclude that the best of Verlaine's poetry is light poetry. He could catch the atmosphere, the mood of a moment, but his emotion was often a surface-emotion. Although he did not possess the weight and penetration that make Baudelaire and Corbière contemporary poets, he sometimes produced a very skilful imitation of the modern manner and it is almost certainly this that has been responsible for the claims made by Coppée. Superficially the process behind Laforgue's

> La rouille ronge *en leurs spleens kilométriques*
> Les fils télégraphiques des grandes routes où nul ne passe

and Verlaine's

> Je devine, à travers un murmure,
> Le contour subtil des voix anciennes

may appear the same, but in reality it is not. Laforgue's lines are an excellent illustration of Aristotle's 'intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilars.' They represent the legitimate use of modern terminology to express fresh combinations of feeling. It is characteristic of the best modern poetry that the assimilation of new objects produces an enlargement, an extension of sensibility. Compared with Laforgue's, Verlaine's image is a pleasant verbal conceit and no more. The *subtil* is seen at once to be suspect, to be an attempt by the poet to give simple feelings the appearance of complexity merely by describing them as subtle. When we examine other passages in his work which seem at first to be a precise description of obscure feelings, we find that the illusion is created by the same devices. In the lines:

> Le piano que baise une main frêle
> Luit dans le soir rose et gris vaguement,
> Tandis qu'avec un très léger bruit d'aile
> Un air bien vieux, bien faible et bien charmant
> Rôde discret, épeuré quasiment
> Par le boudoir parfumé d'Elle.

the effect is carefully built up from without by a judicious use of the soft pedal, by the faint melody and the indeterminate colours. The *main frêle*, the *air bien vieux* and the *rôde discret* contribute to the trick and the *vaguement* gives it away.

Verlaine was very fond of using the words *vague, vaguement, indécis, imprécis* and *imperceptible*. In other poems he has:

> Tes yeux, tes cheveux *indécis,*
> L'arc *mal précis* de tes sourcils
> La fleur pâlotte de ta bouche,
> Ton coeur *vague* et pourtant dodu . . .
>
> . . .
>
> Rien de plus cher que la chanson *grise*
> Où l'Indécis au *Précis* se joint
>
> . . .
>
> . . . l'horizon
> De ma raison.

The trick consists of placing a generalised word immediately in front of or immediately after something that looks like a concrete and particular description. It is intended to create the impression that the veils are about to part to reveal some extraordinary vision or that we are on the point of obtaining a sudden glimpse into hidden feelings. In *Art poétique* the poet wrote:

> C'est des beaux yeux derrière des voiles,
> C'est le grand jour tremblant de midi . . .

We may feel that the veils lend an aura of mystery to the commonplace and that there is nothing behind the words.

It will, I think be agreed that the poets of the Symbolist Movement, far from being the profound analysts of human emotion that they are often said to be, shows signs of losing that remarkable power of translating obscure perceptions into words which distinguishes the great French masters. When Veraline speaks of *ta voix, étrange vision* or *l'arome insigne de ta pâleur,* the new combination of words does not correspond to any new combination of feelings; there is no longer any correspondence between words and the sensations that they are supposed to register. In this respect Verlaine foreshadows the surrealists in whose work we find the same trick of flinging ill-assorted words together in the hope that some new experience will emerge which appears to me to point to a temporary eclipse of the creative gift.

## III.

Many French critics consider that Verlaine's religious poetry marks the summit of his achievement and Remy de Gourmont—that earnest atheist—declared that he was ' one of the greatest of French Catholic poets.' This view is generally accepted by English critics who treat the religious poetry with respectful incomprehension but without much enthusiasm. They comment the loftiness of the poet's thought, but add that the formal language makes the religious poetry difficult for foreigners, implying, perhaps, that after all Englishmen cannot be expected to feel much sympathy for these popish ardours. These doubts seem to me to be well founded and they will serve as a basis for a criticism of Verlaine's religious poetry.

Religious poetry is, broadly speaking, of two kinds. There is the poetry of the great medieval writers in which religion is seen to be an integral part of everyday life, a positive force that extends instead of limiting the poet's field of experience. There is also what for want of a better word is called devotional poetry—the poetry with a religious subject which, for all its merits, seems to turn religion into a special compartment of life.

The first group includes Chaucer and Villon, the second Herbert and the religious poetry of Donne. In his Preface to the *Liturgies intimes,* Verlaine makes an elaborate claim to be included in the first group,[1] but it is clear that he belonged to the second. A great popular poet like Villon could, without any moralising, set the tragedy of lost beauty and a wasted life against their proper background and provide the necessary comment when he wrote, in the superb *Belle Heaumière*

C'est d'humaine beauté l'issues.

In the religious poetry of the nineteenth century this natural, instinctive piety had largely disappeared. When Verlaine sat down to compose a religious poem his work often degenerated into something which reminds us uncomfortably of La Place Saint-Sulpice—

Je ne veux plus aimer que ma mère Marie.

It is tempting to compare the sonnet-sequence in *Sagesse* with Donne's *Holy Sonnets,* but if we set

Oh my blacke soule!

beside

Il faut m'aimer! Je suis l'universel Baiser . . .

most of us probably feel that that the author of *The Hound of Heaven* is more suitable than Donne.

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[1] 'Cette oeuvre a quatre volumes: *Sagesse,* la conversion, *Amour,* la persévérance, une défaillance confessée à dessein, *Parallèlement,* et *Bonheur,* conclusion douloureusement calme dans la suprême consolation.'

It should be noted that *Parallèlement* contains some of Verlaine's obscenest pieces.

The fairest way of testing the merits of Verlaine's religious poetry is to examine one of the sonnets from *Sagesse* in some detail:

> Et pour récompenser ton zèle en ces devoirs
> Si doux qu'ils sont encor d'ineffables délices,
> Je te ferai goûter sur terre mes prémices:
> La paix du coeur, l'amour d'être pauvre, et mes soirs
>
> Mystiques, quand l'esprit s'ouvre aux calmes espoirs
> Et croit boire, suivant ma promesse, au Calice
> Eternel, et qu'au ciel pieux la lune glisse,
> Et que sonnent les Angélus roses et noirs,
>
> En attendant l'assomption dans ma lumière,
> L'éveil sans fin dans ma charité coutumière,
> La musique de mes louanges à jamais,
>
> Et l'extase perpétuelle et la science,
> Et d'être en moi parmi l'aimable irradiance
> De tes souffrances,—enfin miennes,—que j'aimais!

The verse has a certain dignity; but we do not feel, as we do in reading the *Holy Sonnets*, that a vital experience is forging its proper language. It is plain that Verlaine slips into an idiom that comes too easily to French poets. The dignity is too obviously derived from the thud of alexandrines and the generous use of words like *devoirs, zèle, récompense, charité, paix, lumière, assomption* and *éternel*. The theological terms form a striking contrast with Verlaine's own contribution, with the *soirs mystiques*, the *Angélus roses et noirs* and the *aimable irradiance de tes souffrances* which remind us irresistibly of those peculiarly unpleasant coloured engravings and statues of the Sacred Heart that fill Catholic repositories. Familiar concepts are bound to recur in poetry inspired by dogmatic religion, but we know from the poetry of Hopkins that the poet is not prevented from interpreting his personal experience in the light of dogma. What stamps Verlaine's religious poetry as inferior work is not the use of theological terms, but his choice of the sentimental, ready-made phrases as the natural equivalents for his feelings. The contrast between the natural dignity of Christian thought and the corrupt feelings associated with

it is the most disquieting feature of Verlaine's poetry. If he had been consciously insincere, there would have been little point in discussing his work. Unfortunately this was not the case. He was clearly sincere and the faults of his religious poetry are characteristic of a great deal of modern religious art. He was like Francis Thompson, a man whose best instincts had collapsed. Instead of transforming their experience, religion had the reverse effect. It become the means of contact with all that was most vulgar and debased in the life of their time. It was only occasionally that something better managed to find its way through the impoverished vocabulary:

—Qu'as-tu fait, ô toi que voilà
Pleurant sans cesse,
Dis, qu' as-tu fait, toi que voilà,
De ta a jeunesse?

In his Preface to the first critical edition of Verlaine's poetry, which was published two years ago in the admirable ' Bibliothèque de la Plèiade,' M. Le Dantec did not hesitate to describe him as a classic with a world-wide reputation who has his place—this is apparently the final triumph—on the examination syllabus of many universities and schools. Verlaine was not a poet of the calibre of Baudelaire and Rimbaud or even of Corbière and Laforgue. His technical innovations, of which much has been written, were not, in the last analysis, of great importance for the development of contemporary poetry. When he is read in the bulk he soon becomes wearisome and there is only a small amount of his work that one would wish to preserve. But he had a remarkable talent and he succeeded, in spite of the immense difficulties of his time, in doing what no other French poet did. He revived some of the oldest and loveliest verse-forms; and he managed, in his best work, to escape from the Romantic *poncif* and to go back to something more human, more natural and more real.

MARTIN TURNELL.

# EDUCATION AND THE UNIVERSITY

## CRITICISM AND COMMENT

TO invite comment and criticism, and so, if possible, advance the discussion of the issues raised, was of the main purpose in writing the article that, under the first part of the above heading, appeared in *Scrutiny* for September; and, in fact, comment and criticism have been received. One critic was wholly and emphatically adverse and it will be well to start by quoting him at length:

'Looking through the last number of *Scrutiny* I had the feeling that I was handling something unreal. I am sure you will not accuse me of failing to understand how important it is that the arts and culture should be discussed and that standards should be maintained, but it puzzles me how you have been able to go on quite so long without mentioning the war, except as an aside. Not that I expect you to take up a "position" about it. It's enough to have the *Daily Worker* and Middleton Murry's *Peace News* doing that. Surely, however, an article on *Evacuation and Education* or some such topic would have been a great deal more timely than a programme, however admirable, for a hypothetical English School.

'I should like to ask you one or two questions about the article. You outline a course of study for an *élite* which shall ensure the cultivation of sensitiveness and a "delicate integrity of intelligence." You condemn the ordinary Tripos examination, the "race against the clock" and the "athletic endurance which has nothing to do with the qualities that should properly be tested," and you claim that your course of study will produce the "mature preoccupation with value" that should develop the "central mind, the co-ordinating consciousness, capable of performing the function assigned to the class of the educated."

'But what is this function, and when was it so clearly assigned

that it may be referred to without definition? How many people in the present state of society, or how many people in a new " planned " society, are really likely to be able put in train and carry through continuously *actions* (as apart from *attitudes*) involving " values " and the " co-ordination " of society? What do the undergraduates who read English do now, most of them, when they go down? Teach English in schools and universities. What will they do after reading your new curriculum? The same thing, I suspect. Do school masters and dons really " co-ordinate " society as the result of their " mature preoccupation with value "? Surely the people who have a direct effect on modes of living are Cabinet ministers, business magnates, trades union leaders and the higher civil servants—and *mutatis mutandis* their equivalents will go on doing so in any new society. I am not, of course, taking account of people who have to undergo a specialist scientific training—doctors, engineers, oil geologists, physicists, biochemists, and so on—since it is to be presumed that they cannot, by force of the exigencies of their own courses of study, be members of your *élite*.

' If you examine a great government office you will have to admit that the qualities required of most of its members are just those abilities of " athletic endurance " and capacity to beat the clock which you so much despise. At great pressure a certain number of files have to be dealt with in a limited time, and no amount of preoccupation with values, however mature, will enable the work to be got through satisfactorily. I have taken one concrete instance, but if you went over most walks of life much the same would be true, and it will surely be just as true, or truer, in any new planned society. Planning necessitates organization of detail, and the successful prosecution of detailed work necessitates an athletic endurance in dealing with administrative and executive problems.

' Your course of study seems too much to presuppose people who are going to live a life of comparative leisure, when they will have time to enjoy the luxury of " preoccupations," and whose main business will be to educate others to partake of the same life. In other words, it is a course of study implying a society which exists on the fringe of things and can only take a minor place in the affairs of the world. On what are your " central minds "

going to work, except the production of further central minds, in an endless involution? I have put it this way because in your article you used such sweeping generalities. The job of the schoolmaster is immensely important, but the schoolmaster is an executive, not an originator of high policy. His work, over a very long period, will certainly produce great changes, but I assume that when you speak of "the co-ordinating consciousness" of your *élite* you must mean something much more immediate than the slow growth resulting from an improved educational system.'

I am obliged to say that this critic seems to me to have read my words through a distorting medium, so that he has misread them in detail and in sum, and not only misapprehended my declared leading intention, but attributed to me one that couldn't rationally have been expected of me. What excuse I may have given him I must leave it to other readers to judge. Since the last sentence of his quoted above is the nearest to me I may as well start with that, and pick up that '*élite*' which he fathers on me. It is true that the word is to be found in my article (page 103, four lines from the bottom of the page), but in a context that doesn't in the least countenance any critic's use of it. When I use it I am anticipating the objection that I expect too much of my students:

> 'To attract as many such students as possible [I invite my critic to re-read the context that gives "such" its force] would be a part of the aim—as many, that is, of the kind for whom a recognized severity of standard would be one of the attractions. For the reformed Part II—this would be a condition of its influence and importance—would be essentially designed for an *élite*.'

—No doubt it might be said that the aim of attracting an *élite* implies the aim of producing one, but what I myself say has not, actually, the quite different stress and ring of the imputed formulation. And to glide from that into imputing to me the ambition of producing THE *ÉLITE*—the *Élite* that shall solve the problems envisaged in my two articles on universities—is to perform an operation for which I cannot see that I have given any licence in anything I have written. On the contrary, everything I

have written in those articles, explicitly and implicitly, contradicts the imputation. It may be that I haven't achieved the effect of ' considered modesty ' (see page 103) I aspired to, and it is plain, from the animus apparent in the heavy-handling of tags from me, that some of my phrasing acts as an irritant, at any rate on this critic. Moreover, complete recapitulation being impossible, I couldn't ensure the presence in the reader's mind of all that was essential in that earlier article which I referred to as providing a necessary background. Nevertheless, I still feel that there is enough in the offending text to acquit me of responsibility for my critic's reading of it. I should be plain, I think, that I don't offer an Educated Man, or an *élite*, product of a prescribed training, as ' the co-ordinating consciousness ' that shall solve our problems. How little that is the spirit of my approach a glance at page 102 should itself suffice to establish. I say there, quoting from myself, that the problem cannot be

> ' properly envisaged with an eye fixed narrowly upon the desired student product of an educational *régime*—envisaged, that is, in terms of a standard " educated man " to be produced.'

And again:

> ' But there can be no question of pronouncing that the university exists to produce *not* the specialist *but* the " educated man." " Its essential function involves the production of both —though to say ' the educated man ' is perhaps misleading. The problem is to produce specialists who are in touch with a humane centre, and to produce a centre for them to be in touch with; but this centre is not best conceived as a standard ' educated man ' ".'

I add that, of course

> ' There will be no one solution of the problem. If we are to hope, it is for various partial solutions at different places, as particular opportunities are seized, particular conditions taken advantage of. What follows is suggestion how something might be made of one particular opportunity that offers itself at one particular place—the place where the writer happens to be.'

My critic's comment on all this would seem to be that I can't really mean it, since the modes of operation and kinds of process

implied are too slow and indirect. To this I can only reply by asking whether he really thinks that any offer of quick and easy returns could engage his hopeful attention. Local initiatives may achieve changes that are locally decisive, but no one who realizes the nature and size of the problem, or problems, can fail to see that it would take many such initiatives, of many kinds, operating over a long period, to make any appreciable difference of the kind desired.

When immediate exigencies are pressing, long-range preoccupations naturally seem irrelevant. My correspondent speaks of an unpleasant contact with the Blitzkrieg and of a Ministry ' where I am concerned every minute of the day with the practical problems of prosecuting the war.' Here no doubt we have explained the impatience apparent in the parody-effect with which he uses my phrases and in his manner of argument generally:

> ' If you examine a great Government office you will have to admit that the qualities required of most of its members are just those abilities of " athletic endurance " and capacity to beat the clock which you so much despise. At great pressure a certain number of files have to be dealt with in a limited time, and no amount of preoccupation with values, however mature, will enable the work to be got through satisfactorily.'

I don't dispute the truth of this, but I think there is still a function for what has hitherto been distinguished as education. And I don't despise those qualities; I say in my article (associating them with a ' journalistic facility ') that they are not what a course of humane studies should chiefly aim at promoting, and that the system by which a student knows that he has to stake everything on end-of-course examination-room performance lays such emphasis on them as tends very potently to frustrate the essential function of education. The English Tripos as things are tend to foster a glib superficiality, a ' literary culture ' too like that of those *milieux* in which literary fashions are the social currency—*milieux* of which the frequenters cultivate quickness in the uptake, knowingness about the latest market-quotations and an impressive range of reference, all at the expense of real intelligence and disinterested understanding (or interest in anything but kudos). And if the qualities required in a great Government office are what we should be thinking about, then we had better drop the English Tripos altogether; for I imagine

that my correspondent could think of more efficient ways of training for them. We might take a tip from the Nazis, who, one hears, have replaced the outmoded types of liberal education by training in leadership and accountancy.

I don't really suppose that he wants to advocate reforms in that spirit, on the plea that we can no longer afford luxuries, but his argument does seem to drive that way:

> ' I have taken one concrete instance, but if you went over most walks of life much the same would be true, and it will surely be just as true, or truer, in any new planned society. Planning necessitates organization of detail, and the successful prosecution of detailed work necessitates an athletic endurance in dealing with administrative and executive problems.
>
> ' Your course of study seems too much to presuppose people who are going to live a life of comparative leisure, when they will have time to enjoy the luxury of " preoccupations," and whose main business will be to educate others to partake of the same life.'

If I show an inclination to ask whether planning necessitates nothing but athletic endurance in dealing with details, my critic, I suppose, daunts me with:

> ' Do schoolmasters and dons really " co-ordinate " society as a result of their " mature preoccupation with value." Surely the people who have a direct effect on modes of living are Cabinet ministers, business magnates, trade union leaders and the higher civil servants—and *mutatis mutandis* their equivalents will go on doing so in any new society.'

There is no need to dispute these propositions, but I cannot help reflecting that if these people are to live in a society that shows as little concern for anything but the successful prosecution of detailed work as my critic does, then it is indeed a poor look-out for us. Actually, in our old society in normal times (to use a phrase that still comes naturally), even higher civil servants, I believe, are sometimes known to have some leisure, and the kind of books and journals they read and the outlook and attitudes of the people they mix with seem to me to matter enormously. For these civil servants and their friends have a very important part in ' public opinion '

(as we say), and surely, on the state of ' public opinion,' at its various levels and in its various provinces, the kind of decisions that Cabinet ministers, business magnates, trades union leaders and the higher civil servants make, or can be made to make, and the results in practice of those decisions, largely depend.

It is true that the ' schoolmaster is . . . not an originator of high policy,' but if that were all there were relevant to say about him, it wouldn't be clear why his job should be ' immensely important.' The nature of that importance need hardly be specified here; but it may be noted that schoolmasters themselves, directly, count for a good deal in that public whose 'opinion ' matters. It can, then, be admitted without reluctance that a large proportion of undergraduates who read English will, as heretofore, become schoolmasters. But it wouldn't be revolutionary to suggest, too, that there is no reason why an English School shouldn't play some direct part in the education of civil servants. And it wouldn't be extravagant to hope that such a School as the one outlined might produce, or help to produce, some authors, publicists, editors and journalists such as might fitly provide for the reading of civil servants, schoolmasters, schoolmasters' pupils and others (even trades union leaders, perhaps), and help to supply those intelligent and well-informed journals and reviews, the flourishing of which would be evidence of the existence of an intelligent and well-informed public.

Even the problem of ' people who have to undergo a specialist scientific training ' was not so completely ignored as my critic suggests. One hopes that they might benefit by improvements in education at school, especially in the upper forms—improvements that are certainly possible and the promotion of which was looked to as one of the main profits to come from the proposed reforms in university education. They would then be better equipped to benefit by the improved informal *milieu* that the university, it was argued, would provide in realizing more nearly the Idea of a University. What was said on that head I needn't repeat here; I will merely remind my critic that I insisted a great deal on the necessity of keeping the Idea of a University close to the focus of attention, and on the inadequacy of considering the inclusive problem as one of turning out a given type of student-product by means of a given curriculum.

When I wrote my two articles it hadn't occurred to me that I should be called upon to vindicate the idea of liberal education—of education as opposed to special training—and demonstrate the need of institutional provision for giving it effect. All that I took for granted. What I proposed to do was to discuss how the provision might be improved and the need, its nature and scope in terms of the modern world more fully realized, be more effectively met. And I should like to remind my critic, who seems to have carried away the impression that I want my students to spend their time in a dilettante ' preoccupation with value,' that I devoted almost the whole of the more recent article to insisting, in detailed suggestion, that they should acquire a wider, tougher, more real and substantial knowledge—knowledge, in general, of the development of modern civilization—than anyone is likely to carry away from reading English under present conditions. In fact, another correspondent comments:

> ' What I miss is the integration of the specifically literary-critical in the scheme as a whole. One doesn't, I think, see clearly demonstrated the incidence of the courses you have sketched on the specific exercise of judgment on pieces of " literature," the training and testing of which is, I take it, the ultimate end in view. (This doesn't of course imply any doubts about the existence of such an incidence).
>
> ' If it is the crown of the whole should not the literary-critical part of the scheme receive more treatment relative to the rest and in relation to it? As it stands, a superficial censor might say that the article seems to show more concern for history.
>
> ' Or rather, as the article is precise enough in specification, why not consider a third instalment making a triptich with the more general *Why Universities?* of '34? The final instalment might, for instance, attempt to show how the judgment could be improved in sureness, temper and versatility though the more general discipline undertaken.'

To say that the literary-critical part of the scheme is the crown of the whole, and that the training and testing of judgment on pieces of literature is the ultimate end in view, would be to misrepresent my intention. The extra-literary knowledge and understanding that is to be acquired by the mind competent in literature is, in its own

right, essential to the ultimate end. I have no doubt that it will make the student a better literary critic, but the test of his having profited duly by his course of studies will be his handling of a historical or a sociological work as much as his handling of a novel or a book of poems. What, I think, this correspondent might more fairly require of me is some details about my Part I, which is to provide for competence in literature. I will only say at present that I have indicated the general lines and principles in a *Primer for Ezra Pound* written some years ago, which I don't go back on as a whole, though I now dislike certain details in it.

This same correspondent writes:

> 'Since returning to modern university work, I have been terribly impressed by the needs of the non-élite among academic aspirants. I'm coming to think the most urgent need in modern university life is that more attention—I should say: attention at last—should be paid to the vast number who will never qualify for a "good honours degree," but who are not altogether so incapable of civilization as some of their teachers pretend. But this is to intrude a wider issue.'

—An issue, however, that is very relevant to the present discussion. One major profit to be hoped for from such experiments as are proposed for the top level at an ancient university is that serious attempts upon the problem as it presents itself at lower levels and at the modern universities might follow.

This correspondent remarks also on the bearing of my article on university language schools, but this head is more fully dealt with by another correspondent. His lively observations deserve to be quoted at some length:

> 'As you say the war is an opportunity for heart-searching and I had meant for months to raise the question of the Modern and Mediæval Language Tripos. One of the few good results of 1914-18 was the report of the *Commission on Modern Studies*. At that date, as you know, the Cambridge School was described as the hope of the future. I am afraid it still is.
>
> 'Obviously there have been improvements. Languages are better known although there are various opinions even on that point. But if the School is no more than that it is merely a prelude to other "disciplines" and has no right to a separate and

expensive existence. Its work could be far better done by school and student exchange. There were of course practical difficulties in Cambridge (scholarships, etc.) though elsewhere the point was recognized.

'The problem is Part II. You'll forgive me if all my remarks are platitudes. The effect on me (and others) was to fill me with a general loathing for "literature" (foreign) as she is taught. It is difficult enough to do any practical work in English. How to do it in French, German, Russian, etc., in the time at our disposal is insoluble to me. It is even more insoluble when you have men who have never read anything in English and then are hurled at German. That of course doesn't prevent them getting good degrees. I was reduced to the question-spotting technique which always worked. But I detest such methods. It merely left me with a guilty conscience and an interest in economic history. But I feel like you that *Ersatz* (Gothic, etc.) although they interest me, are not what we want. And unless we are very careful we merely collect a great deal from the Historian, etc., and get no further. The examples I call to mind of professional language learners fill me with even worse misgivings. It is bad enough when men have nothing to say in two major European languages. I find it unbearable when they add several minor Slavonic dialects.

'Part II describes itself as "Literature, Life and Thought." I make no comments but as someone said to me the other day the lecture-list is depressing. It reminds me of an official course of lectures called "From Thales to Kant" [8 lectures—the lecturer always a quarter of an hour late]. Or an even worse one [same lecturer] which dished up in eight lectures verbatim part of two of the worst volumes of the Cambridge Modern History! It tries to do everything and achieves very little except an impressive row of facts. The main problem as you say is the exam. menace. With better organization (seminars, etc.) it might be possible to make something within the existing framework. But unless the Modern Languages School works more in collaboration with the English School (and like you I am rather doubtful of such hybrids, though Oxford Modern Greats is a useful pointer) I see no real justification for the School as it stands. It produces an English version of Swiss waiter or a type of literary dilettantism

that is a real menace. I judge from results. I have plenty more to say but won't waste your time. All I know is, what you call " the minimal acquisition of odds and ends " is as prevalent in the Modern Languages School as in the English School. And, except for a few rare exceptions I can see very little " training in carrying on and going forward." Like pre-War visitors to the Riviera they go there to dodge Blackpool. It occurs to few of them that Blackpool is not immortal.

' I began this with the intention of raising points in your article but have rather gone astray. You say quite rightly that the French and Italian paper in Part II serves no useful purpose. I taught (or tried to teach) several people for it and afterwards refused. I could never quite see why the English School should lay such stress on being able " to read French freely and intelligently." Obviously they know something and it is an advantage to be able to read Racine in the original rather than in John Masefield's version! But it seems to me worse than useless to *make* students read it. If they are encouraged they will read it in any case. Racine is an unfortunate example and so is Dante but (for prose especially) I feel there is a far greater scope for good translation. Students are much likelier to read Tolstoy in English than in Russian. And like me it may encourage them to learn Russian afterwards . . .'

The only point I will take up in this letter, which engages my warm sympathies, is that regarding my insistence (I don't know that the English School is fairly to be charged with it) on the ' ability to read French freely and intelligently.' Let me observe first that French for the English reader is in a different case from Russian—or from any other foreign languages, for that matter. Its importance for him is unique, and he has begun to learn it early. And next, my correspondent himself concedes:

> ' I think you *must* do some work outside the student's own language and literature, though examination tests of language are worse than useless.'

I suggest to him again that my proposal points to a reasonable solution of the problem, and, while involving no examination tests, provides the necessary ' encouragement.' As for Dante, to require that students shall tackle him in the original (text-and-translation)

is not to require that they shall ' learn Italian.' He is pre-eminently a case where such a limited undertaking is profitable.

Of the other correspondents, two stressed the formidable expectation entertained of the student, one insisting that my Part II could not be less than a two-year course, and the other questioning the prescribed essay on the change from the seventeenth century to the present day. The last quotation I permit myself must be this, from yet another correspondent:

> ' I only doubted whether the same course could go on repeatedly year after year—whether the teacher wouldn't either get bored or else specialize so closely on some parts of the course that a gulf would appear between what they were interested in and what the students could assimilate.'

—An eternal academic problem is indicated here, though I don't think that it offers to present itself more formidably and insolubly in the kind of school I have sketched than in the existing kind: on the contrary. Nevertheless, it would have to be noted, from the outset, as one to be always borne in mind among those demanding experimental attention. For my scheme makes no pretence to finality, and I take it for granted that, in a few years' experimenting, not only would considerable modifications be worked out, but that a variety of possible developments would be opened up.

F. R. Leavis.

# 'GREATS'

MR. LEAVIS'S *Sketch for an English School* in the last number of *Scrutiny* prompts some reflections on the Greats School at Oxford. For it is plausible to credit the School with potentialities comparable to those of the Cambridge English School. It has the advantage of a syllabus that is relatively speaking not overcrowded either on paper or in practice, and it is comparable with Part II of a Cambridge tripos in that it is almost always begun in the undergraduate's sixth term, not in the third

(or even second) like other Honours Schools. It has moreover a long tradition and the more equivocal advantage of wide prestige. The following remarks must of necessity be much less ambitious than Mr. Leavis's article. The only experience I can claim is that derived from having read Greats, and I have avoided any definite proposals for reform of the kind which give Mr. Leavis's treatment so much of its value. This as will be seen is not only because of my lack of the relevant experience; it is also my belief that little statutory change is necessary.

The Greats School suffers from the tension between scholarship, or specialization, and general education. There is no need to expatiate here on this familiar tension—inevitable, capable of being fruitful, but, one cannot help thinking, excessive at the present time. All I want to do is to touch on its special relevance to Greats. It betrays itself in curiously different ways on the historical and the philosophical side of the School. In history the problem is presumably much the same as in the university study of the history of any other period. The teacher is acutely aware of the ever-changing picture of the history of the ancient world that research of all kinds is revealing. His scholarly conscience will not allow him to teach, or allow his pupils to acquire for themselves, a somewhat antiquated ' authorized version.' Yet there is no reliable and up-to-date synoptic account to which he can refer them (the most adequate general history of Greece in English, for instance, is still that of Grote) and the technique required for mastering the complicated material (epigraphical, archæological, etc.) on which a satisfactory account has to be based is beyond the capacity of the average student. The born historian no doubt finishes his course with a good grasp of the necessary preliminaries for post-graduate research[1] (not even he, perhaps, with a synoptic historical version of his period; but for him it is perhaps fitting that that should come later that it may be all the more mature), the non-historian—I speak from experience—tends to get lost in the mass of detail.

Where the situation differs perhaps from that in other Schools

[1]Compare the charge brought by Professor Chadwick against those who framed the first Honours Schools of English of ' modelling an examination course on a course intended for research students.' (Report on the Teaching of English in England, 1921, p. 217).

of history is this: the concentration on the more technical aspects of historical study strains the bond between Greats history and the part of Greats philosophy which consists in the study of Plato and Aristotle. In particular, little is as a rule done nowadays in Oxford to link the study of the *Republic* with its historical background. It may be that this lack of cohesion is reflected in the general state of Greats philosophy to which I now turn.

I do not think there would be very much quarrel with the above account of the situation in Greats history, however much opinion might differ about the best way of mitigating the present faults.[2] Of the philosophical side it is impossible to write candidly without stirring a hornet's nest. The danger here as well could be described under the general formula of failure to assimilate new and not yet ordered material, but it does not take the form of excess of scholarship. On the contrary, the enemy here is the practice of a dehumanized, sterile and exclusive technique which rules out and denies the significance of most of the problems that have continually occupied the human mind. I refer of course to the phenomenon popularly known as logical positivism, and I lay myself open to the charge of abusing a discipline in which I am incompetent and with which I am too little acquainted. But on these matters one can only speak one's mind, and try to qualify oneself by assimilating the (I am convinced, many) valuable elements in the new ' consistent empiricism ' without being enslaved to it. In any case I am less concerned with the value of logical positivism as a theory than with its significance as a symptom of the centrifugal tendencies in the Greats School.

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[2]The dangers mentioned were described in 1904 by John Burnet in a passage that might have been written to-day. ' The school of *Literae Humaniores* at Oxford, once so powerful an engine of liberal culture, is in danger of becoming professionalized. It is amazing how much the young men know now about the administration of remote Roman provinces, and how they can pick holes in the *Αθηναίων πολιτεία* but they don't appear to have read Thucydides or Tacitus. In philosophy too they know all sorts of marvellous things which I presume are useful to professional students of the subject, but they haven't read the great philosophers.' (*Essays and Addresses*, pp. 43-44.)

Cursory remarks of this kind about the two constituent parts of the Greats course would be scarcely worth making if there were not more to be said about the special possibilities of the School. In themselves they would probably be equally applicable to other historical and philosophical Schools. Any criticism of Greats, as distinct from suggestions how Greats might be induced to wither away into something else, must be based on the assumption that it is a School (as Mr. Tomlin in his *Scrutiny of Modern Greats* in these pages—March, 1936, p. 353—assumed that, in contrast to Modern Greats, it was), and not just a means of pursuing two more or less estimable lines of study concurrently.

What is it then that gives Greats its potentialities? Here I can refer to Mr. Tomlin's article with its contention that ' the perversion of the New Education is illiteracy ' (p. 355). Greats has the immense initial advantage that (in theory at least) its nucleus is the careful study of a set of works of the highest and most central literary and cultural value. For those who are not familiar with the structure of the School, I shall run through the main items. Plato's *Republic,* Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics,* Herodotus, Thucydides, Cicero's *Letters,* the *Annals* of Tacitus. The value of such a nucleus is apparent. From the reading of such works the student's interest can radiate in any of a host of different directions, while it is yet all the time subjected to the discipline of assimilating works which are the concrete embodiment of a great culture and the expression of its finest minds. (I put the case with a certain conscious naïveté—I do not wish to enter on the general argument for and against ' the classics,' so that I confine myself to rather broad generalizations, which however I should be prepared to defend in substance). Such at least is what I take to be the traditional and essentially sound theory of Greats. In practice, the texts often tend to become little more than collections of ' gobbets '—pages on which to hang pieces of knowledge derived from the *Cambridge Ancient History*. Moreover two of the philosophy papers, Logic, and Moral and Political Philosophy, have not even a nominal connection with the prescribed texts. The history of modern philosophy in fact tends to be regarded, rather dangerously, as something to be cantered through in rather a perfunctory fashion, in order to arrive at the stage of so-called ' original thinking ' about the somewhat limited range of problems that it is fashionable to

regard as ' logical.'[3] But if we acquiesce, as seems reasonable, in the virtual autonomy of the two modern philosophy papers, we have for the rest the perhaps uniquely favourable situation of a syllabus that is in need of no statutory change. The importance of this is obvious when we compare the far-reaching reforms that Mr. Leavis is constrained to demand for his proposed English School. But this does not mean that the situation is satisfactory. Earlier on, I touched on the chief dangers, by no means peculiar to Greats; and there is always the risk that the very adequacy of the syllabus on paper may lead to complacency, so that I want to add a few criticisms and tentative suggestions.

The general problems of the division between Mods and Greats is one that could not be adequately discussed without a good deal more experience than I possess. But this at least can be said, that there is a temptation to suppose that since in Mods one has been studying the classics ' as literature ' (in so far, that is, as the study has not been simply linguistic), in Greats one must have ceased to study the texts ' as literature.' At this point any adequate discussion would have to digress into a general consideration of classics teaching; but it can easily be seen even without going into detail that a division like that between Mods and Greats tends to exaggerate a whole series of bogus or half-true antitheses—form and content, literature and thought, etc. The importance of getting rid of such inhibiting notions is surely sufficient to make it worth while to encourage the more careful study of such works as Jaeger's *Paideia* and of original texts from the point of view suggested in that work in preference to, say, the intricacies of the Athenian tribute lists. It will be said that the non-specialist is not expected to bother much about the tribute lists; true, but there is not a clear enough conception of what he can reasonably be expected to do instead.[4] Such a shift of emphasis would also give greater cohesion on the philosophic as well as the historical side—Plato would be

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[3]It should however be added that the Logic *paper* is very wide indeed in its scope, so that a more enterprising tutor or student would not necessarily be penalized.

[4]Statements such as this are obviously of limited value. There may well be a number of tutors who give the sort of encouragement here suggested.

more firmly attached to his surroundings by means of the pre-Socratic philosophers, who tend to drop out altogether because they do not easily fall into place either as ' literature ' or as ' history ' or as ' philosophy.'

The importance of the historical part of Greats as an introduction to the recurrent problems of politics has never been overlooked, and here all that is necessary is a brief reference. But I am not quite sure that enough is made of the fact that the best general history of Greece in English, that of Grote, is at the same time one of the great documents of English liberal thought. Heaven forbid that undergraduates should be encouraged to write patronizing essays about Grote from the secure vantage-ground of their Marxist or near-Marxist wisdom, but reflection on the greatness and the inadequacies of Grote's historical thinking ought to be of considerable educational value. I also remember with gratitude the practice at my college, designed to bring into prominence the political value of the study of Greek history, of prefacing the study of Greats with a careful reading of Headlam's classic little work *Election by Lot at Athens*.

In so far as these notes have had a definite thesis, they have put forward a plea for a return to the traditional idea of the purpose of the Greats School, with of course the necessary adjustments to contemporary interests and needs. My quotations from Burnet shows that such a return could already seem desirable more than thirty-five years ago. Burnet's essay as a whole, however, suggests certain reservations, with the discussion of which I shall conclude. Would such a return involve the danger which Mr. Tomlin (in the article referred to) opposes to the ' illiteracy ' of the ' New Education '—the danger of pedantry? I raise the question especially because Burnet commits himself to certain positions that may sound excessively pedantic or ' reactionary.' For instance, he urges the writing of Greek and Latin verses, and stresses the value of ' formal training ' and discipline in a way that may cause misgiving. I want to say something about this, though it is relevant to the main subject only in so far as Greats is nominally the culmination of an orthodox classical education, because that education, with its insistence on form and discipline, has from time to time received unfavourable attention in the pages of *Scrutiny*, sometimes, I think, not quite justly. I am not concerned to defend the practice (which

I have never engaged in) of writing verses, but I doubt if it should be judged by the possible abuses which Mr. Mason referred to in these pages (June, 1939, p. 33) with quotations from Cyril Connolly which in any case, I am sure rightly, lay more stress on the pernicious effect of the translations by Butcher and Lang and Mackail. Burnet's defence (*op cit.* pp. 40-41) whether it is convincing or not, is not a plea for a mere sterile and trifling ' discipline '[5] and though the ' lasting sense of literary form ' (p. 32) he claims for the product of the old-fashioned style of education may be of the sort Mr. Leavis has described (' For the " classic " Form is something that Flecker, distinguished among modern poets, has and Mr. Pound in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* most certainly hasn't '—*How to Teach Reading*, p. 45), that need not be more than a personal and period deficiency of Burnet. It is true that one is a little disconcerted by the evidence Burnet brings to show that the undergraduate read less of ' the best English poets ' in 1904 than twenty-five years earlier. ' The names to conjure with then were Arnold, Swinburne, Morris and Rossetti—and now where are they? ' ' Where indeed? ' one might ask, with different implications from those Burnet intended. But such inadequacies do not convince me that the traditional aims of classical education and—to return to the point—of the Greats School need more than an (admittedly thorough-going) supplementation by other more contemporary and native interests in the earlier stages of education and in the general self-education that should accompany a university course. If such a verdict should appear complacent, it should be remembered that keeping a tradition fully alive and guarding it against the various temptations that beset it may be quite as exacting a task as more ambitious schemes of reform.

J. C. MAXWELL.

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[5]It is perhaps permissible to apply to secular education Pascal's remarks about the spiritual life. ' C'est être superstitieux de mettre son espérance dans les formalités; mais c'est être superbe de ne vouloir s'y soumettre.'

# COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

## MR. PARKES ON MARXISM.

The finding of a reviewer for books by *Scrutiny* collaborators, especially when, as in the case of Mr. H. B. Parkes's *Marxism: a Post-mortem*, a part of the given book has appeared in these pages, sometimes faces the Editors with a problem of some delicacy. We are anxious that the critical rigour of the review shall be patent beyond all possible suggestion of partiality in the approach. Mr. Parkes's book is reviewed below by a Marxist. But Mr. Hill knows that we think much more highly of Mr. Parkes's work than he does; and, if the hazards of communication across the Atlantic do not frustrate us all, Mr. Parkes will have an opportunity for a reply.

*MARXISM: A POST-MORTEM, by Henry Bamford Parkes (Allen and Unwin, 7/6).*

'Human nature is basically everywhere the same' (p. 164); 'All history . . . proves that power corrupts' (p. 22); 'Members of the capitalist class exercise the functions of organization and management, they take risks in the new industrial enterprises, and —by abstaining from spending all their incomes—they provide savings for industrial expansion' (p. 93); 'The only values which can be justified in terms of a consistent materialism are wealth, pleasure and power' (p. 205); 'There is one phenomenon for which Marxism offers no explanation: the behaviour of Marxists' (p. 143). Those familiar with this type of literature will meet with many old friends: for Dr. Parkes's book is distinguished by a wide eclecticism rather than by originality or penetration.

His aim is to dispose definitely of a philosophy that has been an unconscionable time dying. But his treatment seems to the present reviewer to contain many serious confusions. First, the economic foundation of Marx's thought—not discussed until after p. 80—is so incorrectly stated that Dr. Parkes's refutation loses some of its point. For Marx the determining factor in any state of society was 'the ownership of the means of production.' Dr. Parkes seems to have met this phrase, but its meaning eludes him; and he argues

repeatedly as though ' Marxists judge development by the standard of economic productivity ' (p. 188). ' As the economic system becomes more productive, the social structure and the prevalent ideology must change also ' (p. 167)—here the passage from Engels which Dr. Parkes quotes reveals his misapprehension). ' Inequalities of distribution cause struggles between the different classes ' (p. 69). This makes nonsense of all Marx's economics, for quarrels about *distribution*—as Dr. Parkes painstakingly but irrelevantly shows—might continue in the early stages of a socialist society, and the best ratio of distribution is open to dispute on subjective grounds. But Marx advocated a transition to a society in which, because the means of production were communally owned, both production and distribution could be planned. Dr. Parkes's misunderstanding leads him on to knock down a number of Aunt Sallies of his own elevation, and finally to conclude: ' A low level of economic productivity may (as in the Italy of the Renascence) be associated with a high cultural achievement ' (p. 162). He would be a bold Marxist indeed who would deny that platitude; but a Marxist would not be interested in the productive level of society as a whole so much as in the class ownership of the means of production.

Students of Marxism will recognise the gravity of this fundamental confusion. Equally irrelevant, unfortunately, is Dr. Parkes's refutation of the Marxist theory of the ' withering away of the state.' He ignores the very precise Marxist definition of the state (' It is absurd to speak of the democratic state as an instrument of bourgeois dictatorship'—(p. 61) and proves that the disappearance of the state (in Dr. Parkes's sense of that elastic word) is not 'even theoretically conceivable ' (p. 23; cf. pp. 56, 60-61). A hundred pages later Dr. Parkes conceives the impossible: the state can wither away when the details of life are ' determined by habit, not by discussion, argument and coercion by the majority party,' p. 125. The last three methods are not identical; and if we rewrite the sentence to read ' by habit, discussion and argument, and not by coercion,' we have a tolerable representation of what Lenin said in a work referred to elsewhere by Dr. Parkes.

By a similar sleight of hand Dr. Parkes uses the phrase ' coup d'état ' where Marx speaks of ' revolution,' and so is able to descant on the superior virtues of constitutionalism. But by

definition Marx conceived of revolution as the antithesis of a coup d'état, and of a revolutionary situation as one in which constitutionalism has broken down. The class theory of politics is wished away altogether: ' When . . . an industry is in a state of depression, it is frequently necessary that its workers should agree to lower wages ' (p. 80). That word ' necessary ' begs the question Marx made it his life's task to raise.

These confusions come from Dr. Parkes's own mind and method, and are a little hard on the victim. However much they disagreed as to his success or failure, most people would agree that one of the most permanently valuable of Marx's experiments was his attempt to introduce a scientifically precise terminology and to expel loose words with content primarily emotive. The critics of Marxism usually either accept his terminology or reject it altogether for stated reasons. Not so Dr. Parkes. He not only uses Marx's strict terms with a laxity that intentionally or unintentionally creates confusion: he does not seem to be aware that these words have a precise meaning. He is worse than dishonest: he is obtuse.

Dr. Parkes's statements have the kind of amiable intangibility that most infuriated Marx, and which makes it difficult indeed to know whether one agrees with him or not. ' Only a free society can achieve economic progress ' (p. 206). ' Only a free society can achieve cultural and intellectual development ' (p. 207). All no doubt true: but can any precise meaning be attached to the word ' Freedom '? Dr. Parkes defines it as ' the right of the individual to do what he chooses ' (pp. 113-114). Such freedom clearly never has existed anywhen, and we shall shortly see that Dr. Parkes is certainly not prepared to allow it to bad men. ' The humanistic ideal,' he rather more cautiously observes, ' cannot be deduced by processes of reasoning from any philosophy; it is a fundamental datum of the human consciousness ' (p. 204). 'Moral intuitions are prior to philosophical rationalization ' (p. 205). Some call it thinking with the blood. This is the antithesis of argument. Dr. Parkes makes his emotional noises and when I dissent he says his noises are prior to philosophical rationalizations. We can get nowhere on that level.

But the looseness of phrase and thought supplies Dr. Parkes with his most dangerous weapon, a logical Morton's fork. ' The argument of this book . . . is that Stalinism is the logical and

necessary consequence of Marxist and Leninist theory,' he announces clearly on p. 50. Marx, however, ' never became a genuine Marxist ' (p. 196) ' Lenin's Marxism was often more verbal than real ' (p. 14). The popular front policy adopted by the Communist International in 1935 was ' a complete abandonment of all those doctrines which had characterised Communism since its origin ' (p. 41). The reader may be a little bewildered but the point clearly emerges that the Marxists are equally reprehensible whether adhering slavishly to dead dogma or absorbing it with ' cynical opportunism.' (pp. 34, 184).

Dr. Parkes makes use of a blanket concept ' Marxists ' which may or may not include Marx but certainly covers something much wider than most Marxists would accept. The Second and Third Internationals are used impartially to illustrate the follies and failures of ' the Marxists,' those these two bodies have never been distinguished for their ideological agreement. (Similarly the British Strike of 1926 demonstrates the ineffectiveness of revolutionary methods!—p. 60). To these ' Marxists ' some surprising views are attributed, such as ' Their insistence that all aesthetic and intellectual creations are mechanistically determined by the economic and social system ' (p. 170). ' According to the canons of Marxist criticism, art can have no permanent value . . . It would appear to follow that there is no reason why Communists should read either ' Dante or Shakespeare,—Marx's two favourite poets (p. 173). This is either deliberate misrepresentation or mere ignorance of the considerable body of Marxist criticism in existence, not only in Russia: either is culpable. To talk about ' what would appear to follow,' when there is a mass of detailed evidence, is not untypical of Dr. Parkes's lack of respect for scientific method.

Usually the views of ' Marxists ' are not supported by *pièces justificatives*: the reader appreciates the prudence of this on the occasions when references are given. Thus the startling statement, ' They argue that Newton's cosmology was a reflection of seventeenth-century absolutism and Darwin's revolutionary theory of nineteenth-century bourgeois competition (p. 171), can certainly not be justified by the reference to Hessen's study of Newton, and even if it could he is not a plural entity. Later on the same page the implication that Engels argued ' that when society changes the laws of nature also change ' is refuted by the extract quoted. More

often the misrepresentation is less easy to detect because of the impression of Dr. Parkes's references to these unspecified ' Marxists.' ' Have they stopped beating their wives?' he thunders; and how are we to know they are not bachelors?

This confusion was peculiarly Mr. Parkes's own. A further source of muddle, which he shares with a multitude of well-meaning moralists, may be summed up as the theory that the idea of a cake is better than half a loaf. Mr. Parkes again has two prongs to his fork. One is called ' liberalism,' and covers everything in the civilization of the last century and a half of which he approves. The other is called ' capitalism,' which stands for everything in that civilization of which he disapproves. ' The principles of the system ' ' must not be confused with the practices of capitalism ' (p. 124). That was Marx's mistake. Mr. Parkes, on the other hand, looks back to an 18th century golden age which has somehow gone wrong through ' an astonishing misinterpretation of the details of John Locke and Adam Smith and Thomas Jefferson ' (p. 200). He argues and few will deny it that if the purest ideals of ' liberalism ' could all be realized without all the accidental accompanying beastliness of ' capitalism,' how nice that would be. On the other hand he stresses the ugly realism of Marxism, its analysis of capitalism, and its attempt to discover scientifically what practical steps are to be taken to get out of the mess which (Marx believed) liberal illusionists helped to reconcile the world to. ' The remedy,' Dr. Parkes observes severely, ' . . . is to reform the practice, not to abandon the principles ' (p. 130). ' An examination of how liberal democracy has attempted to reconcile individual freedom with the need for order and for co-operation will show that the problem is not insoluble (p. 115); an examination of how mediæval alchemy attempted to turn iron into gold will also no doubt show that that problem is not insoluble either.

Dr. Parkes's ' liberalism ' is not only non-existent, it is not even capable of existence; for it is self-contradictory. On the one hand, ' once a government begins to interfere with the mechanisms of the free market and with the flexibility of prices and earnings, it finds itself inexorably compelled to increase its control of the economic system.' And then that most terrifying of all spectres, bureaucracy, rears its ugly head (p. 147). On the other hand, in Dr. Parkes's Utopia, while ' the right of the individual to do what

he chooses ' (p. 113-114) is preserved, ' economic rewards must be more closely co-ordinated with social services, so that only those persons can achieve personal wealth who have genuinely increased the wealth of the community ' (p. 120). How that is to be done without interfering with the mechanisms of the free market,' Dr. Parkes prudently refrains from even asking; this cake remains on the table whilst he is enjoying its taste. Dr. Parkes then uses this abstract ' liberalism ' as a measuring rod to test the practice of what claims to be the most practical of all philosophies. Heads he wins, tails the Marxists lose.

His illustrations are illuminating. ' Men enjoy more freedom when the state restricts the power of the strong to oppress the weak ' (p. 115) (which in this never never land it very cleverly does without interfering with ' the mechanisms of the free market '); but what Marx aimed at was to create the conditions for a society in which there should be no strong to oppress the weak. Whether Dr. Parkes's naïveté is assumed or not is difficult to determine. ' The purpose for which new industries are developed is the production of more consumer's goods ' he states as a self-evident fact in the middle of a discussion of Marx's economic theory (p. 103). ' Capitalism causes war only when it abandons the free market ' (p. 140). Tariffs, like Topsy, just ' grow ' (p. 141). Yet Dr. Parkes claims to have read Das Kapital and Lenin's Imperialism. The complaint is not that he disagrees with and disapproves of what he is criticising, but that he never seems to have grasped its point at all. He discusses the materialist conception of history, and yet is content to write, '' All historical experience shows that the fall of autocracy is followed immediately by the establishment of political freedom and representative government ' (p. 63). Yet Dr. Parkes accuses the Marxists of over-simplified generalization and fatalism and neglect of the human factor in historical causation. Again he criticises the labour theory of value, yet writes, ' The most socially useful labour is (or under desirable social conditions ought to be) the labour which produces the largest profits.' (p. 91). The bracket contains a very Parksian slide from the real to the rational, but either version would seem to a Marxist (on the kindest interpretation) to misuse the word ' profits.'

Space forbids further illustration of Dr. Parkes's methods. But it is worth recording one or two of his positive contributions to

human thought, for they are as valuable as his destructive criticisms. ' Modern society is not divided merely into two classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat ' (p. 64). ' Paradoxical as it may appear,' he perceives, ' the purpose of all Marx's career was to abolish the proletariat ' (p. 196). The only basis for a permanent civilization is that men should put back into the earth as much as they take out of it ' (p. 188). ' Communism was classical but Fascism was a romanticist nightmare ' (p. 32). ' Marxism . . . should properly be regarded as a Christian heresy ' (p. 205), a use of the word ' properly ' which should interest future lexicographers. ' Domination over others or interference with the rights of others, is always pathological ' (p. 203). Finally two sentences, each a necessary part of the chain of destructive arguments in which it occurs, between which the reader may take his choice:—' Unskilled labour . . . does not easily acquire the sense of unity and the tradition necessary to a vigorous trade unionism ' (p. 67): ' Industrial unions representing unskilled labour are usually more honest and militant than the craft unions of the labour aristocracy ' (p. 80).

In short, this book is not what it claims to be, a scientific and definitive summing up of Marxism. Dr. Parkes has read discursively in the secondary literature about Marxism, but never mentions ' The German Ideology ' or ' Materialism and Empirio-Criticism,' to give only the most obvious examples. Dr. Parkes selects targets where he finds them without attempting to assess relative significances. When he cannot find a target he constructs it. The book has a superficial attractiveness due to its pleasant and clear style, but this only reveals the commonplaceness of the thought. Here the author suffers by his very virtues. Dr. Borkenau, for example, from whom Dr. Parkes takes many of his ideas, does this sort of thing far more effectively, for at least his style does not lend itself to immediate comprehension. Dr. Parkes sets against Marx's attempt at a scientific analysis of society all the common prejudices and ' moral intuitions ' of the average university educated man of secure position, but never attempts to discover whether these intuitional truths are mutually compatible. The ' nationality ' of Marxism, Dr. Parkes finds, ' is not of a kind which commends itself immediately to the disinterested intellect ' (pp. 155-6). And the really perplexing problem, for him, is, ' What motive caused such men

as Marx and Lenin themselves to abandon comfort and respectability and to choose poverty and obscurity in exile?' (p. 193). Dr. Parkes has not said the last word on Marxism, but Marx himself long ago made many relevant remarks about 'Katheder-Sozialisten.'

CHRISTOPHER HILL.

## A SCIENTIST ON PROPAGANDA

*POLITICAL PROPAGANDA, by F. C. Bartlett (Cambridge University Press, 3/6).*

Professor Ernest Barker's new series of books on Current Problems opens with the excellent choice of a scrupulously scientific thinker to write on a topic that too often falls to the verbal magicians among sociologists—those whose impressive orotundities are no less a technique of mass hypnotism merely for being aimed at highly intellectualised élites. In contrast to such writers Professor Bartlett brings true scientific scepticism to his problems. He is especially sceptical of sweeping intellectual generalisations and all-inclusive themes. In their place he offers his characteristic combination of painstaking attention to familiar facts together with unexpected subtlety in the analysis of some of them. On the difference between education and propaganda, for instance, he takes up a commonsense standpoint which leads to no radical formulation, but which is at least unpretentious and will not impede other writers. Immediately after this, however, he offers, still in the simplest possible words, a basic fact which is of the utmost practical and scientific importance:

> 'It is one of the curious things about human society that, where potentialities of division are very numerous, the possibility of serious splitting may be at a minimum, but where possible lines of division are few, the group may be in serious danger of radical deterioration. For when potentialities of division are numerous, if a split occurs it is likely to affect individuals or small groups of individuals only, leaving the general society not much upset. But where there are one or two simple lines of possible cleavage, any actual division works disaster to the whole group.'

A statement like this seems to give a gentle jog to one's mental kaleidoscope; imposing no insistent pattern itself, it yet sets going new and stimulating rearrangements among one's own ideas.

It is occasional points like this—and they occur chiefly in the highly interesting first chapter—which distinguish Professor Bartlett's book from what many other writers might have produced. A little of the factual material is new and much more is sufficiently unfamiliar to be well worth including in a low-priced book of topical interest. But in the main the book represents the matter-of-fact thinking of a man who is concerned with the immediate problem confronting his nation in war-time. While looking at the problem from a specialist standpoint he recognises that common sense must often bridge the gap between basic scientific principles and present exigencies. The book will almost certainly do something —by the ideas, information, and the intellectual cautions it suggests —to improve people's appraisal of the strategy of British propaganda conceived of as a weapon of war and a tool of government.

But what lifts it out of the class of thinking which the intelligent weeklies might provide is its attentiveness to the small-seeming basic facts upon which the familiar features of contemporary social life can be seen to rest. An exceptional capacity for discovering significant broad implications in facts and materials that most people take for granted has distinguished Professor Bartlett's more technical work. His present topical book is an easy opportunity for the general reader to sample his distinctive intellectual flavour.

D. W. HARDING.

*MILTON AND HIS MODERN CRITICS, by Logan Pearsall Smith (O.U.P. 3/6).*

The most interesting thing about this little book is that it won the editorial endorsement of the *Times Literary Supplement* (Nov. 9), which notes that some of those people who won't let other people read Milton are ' Cambridge dons who apparently draw their status and their livelihood by preparing the young for the English Tripos.' —' It is noticeable that the appreciators of Milton whom Mr. Pearsall Smith cites were all sound classics.'

*FOLIOS OF NEW WRITING, AUTUMN, 1940 (The Hogarth Press, 5/-).*

One is grateful, these days, for any effort to keep literary activity and experiment alive, and the editors of *New Writing* deserve at least the tribute due to courage and persistence. If they invite criticism by severe standards, that is in itself an achievement. The Autumn number is rather more interesting than its predecessor, and the chief credit for this must go to Mr. Orwell for his article on the war, and to Mrs. Woolf and Mr. Spender for their two criticial Essays. The articles may be grouped together as possessing a common general theme, which is, roughly speaking, the idea of continuity. Such a preoccupation is a welcome sign in a periodical which has previously discussed the problems of the relation between culture and the coming social-economic revolution mainly in terms of the crudest Marxian apocalyptic.

Mrs. Woolf's essay, *The Leaning Tower,* was delivered as an address to a W.E.A. audience in Brighton. She discusses the fact that up to about 1925 the great majority of writers owe their education and training to economic and social advantages and accepted this fact without question, whereas those of the last fifteen years are painfully conscious that the ivory tower of their privileged position is leaning. Unable to renounce their education and upbringing they have taken refuge in self-analysis, self-pity and hysterical attacks upon the more obvious scapegoats of society; at the same time, ' to their credit but to their confusion,' they have been forced into left-wing politics. With such a divided and confused consciousness it is not surprising that they have produced no very significant literature. After some pertinent criticisms of poems by MacNiece and Day Lewis, Mrs. Woolf turns to the prospects for literature in the new society which we hope will emerge after the war. The novelist, she says, will have real people to describe, people whose personalities have not been cramped by social inequalities: the poet, too, in sharing a common belief, will be relieved of the burden of didacticism.[1] If we have any faith in human nature we must all hope it will be so, but it still seems

[1]The poet, it appears, will also gain a richer vocabulary from the mingling of classes and dialects. But surely Mrs. Woolf cannot really think that the making of a vital speech is such a simple process?

necessary to insist that everything will depend on the kind of classless society which emerges: the Americanization of Russia is sufficient warning. Mrs. Woolf, of course, is not really as simple as this, in spite of her apparently rather cavalier dismissal of ' the old class literature.' Her final advice is sound enough: the Common Reader must learn critical discrimination, checking new literature by careful comparison with the past. Only through intelligent criticism can the cultural tradition of the minority be made available for the whole new society.

Mr. Spender, writing on *The Creative Imagination in the World To-day*, covers similar ground, though starting from a slightly different angle. He has some sensible things to say about the process by which art becomes subordinate to politics:

> Finally [the writer] belongs to a kind of bureau in which he is taking orders from the worst writers who boasted of their indifference to ' aesthetic standards ' and who care only for the ' usefulness ' of art to the people (just as though an aeroplane whose designer was indifferent to the standards of hydrostatics might be ' useful ' to the people . . .
>
> When the State withers away, the Communist manifesto says there will be no more politics. But if, until then, there is nothing but politics, what will remain?

He defines the writer's function somewhat in the manner of Mr. Pound in *How To Read*.

> The task of the poet is to organize words in such a way that their meaning is clear and unmistakable. This is betrayed if the poet takes over the propaganda of political parties and uses words in false contexts. For if the meanings are allowed to become lost, the living values become lost or unrelated to the past contexts in which they have expressed something real . . .
>
> What is required of the artist is sufficient faith in the living forces of the past and present to realize that every true word is a revolt against present conditions.

I think that readers of *Scrutiny*, to whom these notions are sufficiently familiar, will be encouraged to find them appearing in a magazine of the character and history of *New Writing*. They will probably ask, nevertheless, exactly what these generalizations amount to in terms of particular criticism. Some of Mr. Spender's

collocations of writers are a little odd, as for instance when he speaks of the intense concern for a truthful attitude to the poet's own experience which is common to Rilke, Eliot, Auden, Laura Riding, George Barker, Dylan Thomas.

Mr. Orwell, in *My Country Right or Left,* writes of the effect of the last war on the ' just too young ' with his usual detachment and penetration (' I am convinced that part of the reason for the fascination that the Spanish Civil War had for people about my age was that it was so like the Great War ') and concludes with some interesting reflections on the power of Public School patriotism to transmute itself into a new loyalty to socialism and revolution.

The prose fiction in this number is less irritatingly pretentious than in the last, but it seldom rises above a dead level of dull competence. Mr. Coombes' account of a night of A.R.P. work in a Welsh mining valley is honest and convincing, though written in an angular journalistic style: Mr. Goldman's picture of an East-end adolescent is little more than a character-sketch: other stories depend mainly on the documentary interest of their varied settings—a Californian orange orchard, a Maori village in New Zealand and so on. Miss Strachey's autobiographical account of a Portuguese waiter's life has a little more substance, but it is a relief to turn to Mr. Pritchett's story, which has at least a unifying sardonic humour and a Dickensian command of physical detail.

The verse is not very interesting, on the whole. Mr. Day Lewis's poem, with its simple lyric theme, remains unconvincing in spite of what we are told of the poet's ' swarming intuitions,' his imagination—' My royal impulsive swan '—and his desire to ' shiver Into a twelve-branched river Of visionary light.' Mr. Brasch's three poems have an occasional distinction of phrase and rhythm, but their themes are not very subtle and their imagery is by Auden and Spender out of Eliot. Mr. Laurie Lee's imagery remains printer's ink, and his rhythms are flat and dull. Mr. Warner's three sonnets are too fluent and glib in their combination of New Signature cliché with conventional rhythm to leave any distinct impression. A periodical devoted to creative work must naturally be prepared to publish much fragmentary and experimental work, and a good deal of it is bound to be ephemeral. At the same time it is rather difficult to see why so much of it should be so dull and lifeless.

R. G. Cox.

# CATS IN AIR-PUMPS

(OR POETS IN 1940).

*POETS OF TO-MORROW: CAMBRIDGE POETRY* 1940 (*The Hogarth Press, 6/-*).

*THE GATHERING STORM, by William Empson* (*Faber and Faber, 6/-*).

*SONG AND IDEA, by Richard Eberhart* (*Chatto and Windus, 6/-*).

*EAST COKER, by T. S. Eliot* (*Faber and Faber, 1/-*).

In 1929 the Hogarth Press published the first volume of Cambridge poetry. It marked a date in literary history, for it saw the supersession of the Georgians by the imitators of Eliot; and more specifically it witnessed the first appearance in book form of the work of two young poets who possessed a real personal distinction —William Empson and Richard Eberhart. Now, in November, 1940, appears another volume of Cambridge poetry, the third volume of Eberhart and the second of Empson, and also a new poem from Mr. Eliot. The intervening decade would seem to manifest a completeness and self-sufficiency which mark it off as an era in our cultural history.

The Georgians were at one time a ' poetic renaissance '; since the advent of Mr. Auden we have had a second renaissance which has to some extent muffled the report made by Mr. Eliot's impact on the literary scene. As poetic fashions slip into perspective it may become apparent that the phenomenon of the ' pylon ' poets intimately resembles the phenomenon of the Georgians; at least the prevailing tone of Cambridge's Poets of To-morrow has singular affinities with that of the day before yesterday. The volume opens with a slightly jazzed version of de la Mare: and Yeats is throughout a more pervasive influence than Eliot. It is true that there is a number of nasty-slick lyrics in the manner of the Auden-MacNeice play and the Auden-Ewart ballad, but by this time these have as quaintly period an air as (say) Nicholas Moore's assumption of the nobly romantic mantle. It is true that one or two pieces are merely diluted Hopkins and that there are a few anecdotal little verses rather in the manner of Frost and Ransome; but for the most part the ' simplicity ' of Auden's later manner merges into neo-Georgianism and, while there are few poems that are obviously bad, neither is there anything of a personal distinction.

On the whole, young poets of to-day (or very young ones of to-morrow) don't seem to claim much for their verses

> (We promised no analysis, no watching
> of the new operation and here
> no promise shall willingly be broken)

and are prone—at least when they're recovered from the slick disillusion Auden-cum-Noel Coward stage—to pin their money on Simple Goodness and ' the palpable and obvious love of man for man.' It may be, as the introductory note suggests, that (like the Georgians) they aim to write ' as simply and directly as possible ' and that ' the political note is less insistent,' but I cannot myself see they are concerned in any profitable sense with the establishment of ' a contemporary legend.' If this can be done at all, it cannot be achieved by good intentions but only by poets with at least a smattering of genius, and with something to say. In Cambridge Poetry 1929 there were potentially two such poets and this, in so small a volume, was not a bad showing.

With a paradoxical vivacity worthy of Mr. Empson himself, his publishers in 1940 describe him as ' the most brilliantly obscure of modern poets.' I have always felt that Mr. Empson's intellectual ingenuity, in itself, is something of a let-down. When the ' ideas ' are explained one experiences a damp disappointment that the point is merely *that,* so that one tends, if one isn't careful, to feel a little disappointed with the poem also. The justification for explaining Mr. Empson's ideas is that, once explained, one can begin to respond to the poem, can begin to realise that, in *To an Old Lady* and *Legal Fiction* and the few others the ideas aren't a let-down because the intellectual agility is merely one aspect of a sprightliness of sensibility—the juxtaposition of ' ideas ' merely a part of a ' metaphysical ' juxtaposion of feelings. The secret lies in the verse's tension; and the intellectual poise that is reflected (like Pope's) in the precise balanced stanza-forms itself acquires an emotional quality.

Mr. Empson's undertaking was in essence precarious, and one can see—I think only too clearly—what happens when the ' poise ' collapses. Without the delicate imaginative impetus, the ideas become juxtaposed merely as ideas so that, once explained, their cleverness seems tawdry; and the subtle-decorous movement

degenerates into looser, because emotionally flabbier, rhythms or into what Mr. Empson himself calls ' prattle.'

An example of the crossword-puzzle of ideas type of poem is *Bacchus* which rhythmically is academically inert and for that reason, more than because of its cerebral convolutions, obscure. Examples of the flabbier-rhythmed poems are the conversational pieces, *The Beautiful Train, Manchouli,* and *Ignorance of Death,* with its perky-pert and, for Mr. Empson, too easy conclusion—

> Otherwise I feel very blank upon this topic,
> And think that though important, and proper for anyone to bring up,
> It is one that most people should be prepared to be blank upon;

while the prattling poems may be represented by facetious quasi-ballads in the Audenesque mode (only cleverer) such as *Anecdote from Talk* and (Mr. Empson's ' letter from China '), *Autumn on Nan-Yueh.*

The degeneration is perhaps more obvious in Mr. Empson's habit of giving his verses an appearance of coherence and concentration by the device of a triolet-like repetition of lines (*cf. Aubade, Success, Reflection from Anita Loos*). Betraying too is the device in the poem *China* whereby confusion is represented by running the syntax in alternate lines—a device which may be susceptible of a convincing musical interpretation (as in the Chaos movement from Satie's *Mercure*) but which is fundamentally inappropriate to so immediate a medium as words. What used in the earlier poems to be contrarieties of thought and feeling subtly welded together here become the most mechanical of applied juxtapositions: the taut complex of words and feelings has here explicitly—as it has less patently in all the poems of this volume—splintered, disintegrated. Similarly, in *Missing Dates,* the single rhyme, often unconvincingly forced, is presumably intended to represent the insidiousness and the tediousness of ' the waste that kills.' And all this—the rhythmic dulness, or the rhythmic falsity, or the prattling—is the more significant in that, as we have seen, the success of Mr. Empson's finest poems depended upon that characteristic rhythmic precision which treads catlike on ' pin-point extremes.'

The trend of this chonologically arranged volume is from precision to prattle, and Mr. Empson attributes this process to his dissatisfaction with, and suspicion of, his 'clotted kind of verse.' This is one way of looking at it; but one might, perhaps, more pertinently, maintain that Mr. Empson once had something to say—the pressure of experience that created his technique—and that when this pressure was no longer operative and the crossword interest was revealed as inadequate, he prattled instead. In a sense, Mr. Empson's publishers are right in saying that his verse has become simpler; but it has not become less obscure. The issues it deals in are less complex because less deeply felt; its technique, that is, has grown relatively irresponsible.

It seems to me, quite seriously, that the most satisfactory part of this volume is the notes. They are written in a sensible, urbane prose and their ideas are usually more interesting than the poems they are supposed to be embodied in. That Mr. Empson's prose should be better than his poetry bears out the case I have been trying to make about that poetry's retrogression; and is perhaps supported by Mr. Empson himself when he says: ' What we had before us to write about, in the years when these poems were written, was chiefly the gathering storm of the present war; and so far as I can feel I had anything to say about that I would want to get it said somehow, even if only in a note.'

These notes manifest a somewhat surprising degree of self-knowledge, and their tone is apologetic, almost diffident, with Mr. Empson now being ashamed of his verse's crossword interest—

> ' Any decent poetry has got more than puzzle in it, and the motives behind making the puzzle are themselves very mixed. It is always part of the claim of the puzzle in poetry that this is the best way to say something. Clearly interest in mere puzzle can be bad for a writer (and marks of an obscure moral worry about whether there was too much puzzle going on are I am afraid a disfiguring feature of my small output here) '—

and now defending it—

> ' . . . it seems to me that this revival of puzzle interest in poetry, an old and natural thing, has got a bad name merely by failing to know itself and refusing to publish the answers.'

Mr. Empson's apology recommends itself to reason; and, if his

defence has adequate foundation, there is a melancholy irony in his status as a puzzle maker in that there are so few people at all eager to work out the answers. It's a sad lot to be an artist without a public, but it's sadder still to be a crossword-puzzle maker with no-one to fill in the blanks, for the artist has, must have, a certain self-sufficiency, whereas the puzzle is meaningless apart from its solution. Really the irony extends to Mr. Empson's position as a poet, as is neatly revealed when he makes a plea, with which most people would sympathise, for the dream-realities of ' everyday ' life in a poem as esoteric as *Your Teeth are Ivory Castles*. In another poem Mr. Empson remarks ' I, a twister love what I abhor ' and, apart from the fact that *Your Teeth* lacks justification when the note makes its point so much more effectively, I am inclined to think that in all Mr. Empson's poetry nowadays there is an element of twisting that his prose repudiates. It seems to me significant that I have quoted so little from the verses; the ' texture ' offers next to nothing for local inspection.

Mr. Eberhart has this in common with Mr. Empson, that he doesn't care for critics; but his distrust of them is the romantic distrust of Blake:

> The Critic with his pained eye
> Cannot my source espy
> For truly and purely to eye it
> He would have as a critic to die.
>
> I with joyful vision see,
> I cannot his purpose acquire.
> For if the Critic were truly free
> He would love, and not be a liar.

There are other poems in the manner of the Blakean squib (*cf. I went to see Irving Babbitt*); there are many passages such as

> And from this I saw grow
> Although my sense shook with fear
> A crystal Tear
> Whose centre is spiritual love,

complete with capitalized abstractions; and there are several poems in Blake's simple ' visionary ' stanza. This overt statement of the Blakean tenet—

If I could only live at a pitch that is near madness
When everything is as it was in my childhood
Violent, vivid, and of infinite possibility;
That the sun and moon broke over my head . . .

I gave the moral answer and I died
And into a realm of complexity came
Where nothing is possible but necessity
And the truth wailing there like a red babe,

is continually reinforced by phrases such as ' Then I arose in holy love like a child '; and we all know that Blake is a very dangerous model. But it would be hasty to assume that there is, for Mr. Eberhart's interest in Blake, inadequate justification, since although he has not the visionary gleam, and probably could not have it (for ' Where have gone the grace and stately carriage, The thick perfections of a kind society . . . What can naked man do? What poems? Against disastrous wars of actuality?'), there is nonetheless a quality in his verse that may properly be called terrifying. It is not the terrifyingness of great poetry because it is too exclusively personal: but it is fiercely and passionately sincere and it gives to his verse its distinctive movement.

To say that an extreme, even excessive, sensitiveness, to nervous experience is the distinguishing mark of Mr. Eberhart's verse may not seem to be saying much: yet it does, I think, serve to differentiate him from the other poets (with the possible exception of the Auden of *Paid on Both Sides*) who were his contemporaries, for, apart from a certain dim relation to the sensuous aspects of the seventeenth century that Eliot probably orientated, his verse is, in its personal manner, singularly free of the representative contemporary influences.

The full of joy do not know; they need not
Know. Nothing is reconciled.
They flash the light of Heaven indeed.
Let them have it, let them have it, it is mild.

Those who suffer see the truth; it has
Murderous edges. They never avert
The gaze of calculation one degree,
But they are hurt, they are hurt, they are hurt.

Like the verses about the innocent eye of the child already quoted. this is perhaps too explicit, even the incantatory repetition, the painful catch-in-the-breath, of the last line: but something comparable with this anguish seems to me to be the impetus behind all Mr. Eberhart's best verse. In all of it there is a quality of suffering —nerves exposed and jangling, agitated by contact with the outside world—which is communicated in the queer nervous rhythms and in the characteristic verbal juxtapositions. Consider the delicate, quivering rhythm of *The Largess,* or of this—

> Now is the air made of chiming balls.
> The stormcloud, wizened, has rolled its rind away.
> Now is the eye with hill and valley laved
> And the seeds, assuaged, peep from the nested spray.
> The bluebird drops from a bough. The speckled
> meadow-lark
> Springs in his lithe array. Fresh air
> Blesses the vanished tear; the bunched anguish.
> The laughing balls their joyful pleasure tear.
> Renewed is the whole world and the sun
> Begins to dress with warmth again every thing.
> The lettuce in pale burn; the burdock tightening;
> And the naked necks of craning fledglings,

particularly the tender resilience of the last few lines; or consider the naïve, breathless hesitancy, and scurrying, in the last lines of these stanzas from *Recollection of Childhood*:

> O the jungle is beautiful the jungle is wild
> Here are the rodents and the butterflies,
> The thorn tree prickles and the shady grottoes,
> And I'll lie in the sun all day, and the shade.
>
> And here is the orchard, bulging big fruit,
> Adazzle in the eyes all red and golden,
> There is the barn and the many cows,
> Hurray for the hay, I'll fall and tumble in the hay.

Similarly the ' surprising ' verbal juxtapositions (' under the copeless skyscrapers just and queer,' ' the dark threat of being born,' ' The pupil in the eye is tight As a sprout in the air ') have little

in common with seventeenth century wit and nothing at all with early Eliot where the intention is to administer an audacious intellectual jolt: the effect here is never cerebral but almost physical, a sensuous quiver, a trembling in the nervous response.

This, then, is the essence of Mr. Eberhart's gift, and it is a remarkable one. But what made his early poems peculiarly interesting was that he possessed in addition what very few contemporary poets have—the faculty of using these vivid impressions to define an attitude, to create a poem as a whole. In a rather patent fashion one can see this in *To a Groundhog* where some characteristic reflections on death and decay are woven into more complex and far-reaching emotions; more subtly it is manifested in the comparatively balanced movement—a tranquillity as it were poised over the most agile and alert conflict of feelings—in poems like *Caravan of Silence* and *Necessity*. It is in this respect of ' wholeness ' that Mr. Eberhart's recent poems seem to me deficient. The delicate appreciation of the moment of sensuous response remains: but the ability—or perhaps the desire—to relate these moments to the complexity of adult interests is less marked. Significantly, it is the least pretentious poems in the new volume that are the most successful; and these poems repeatedly return to the recollection of childhood experience. The little poem called *The Child* supports the contention that the terrifying quality we have noticed in all Mr. Eberhart's verse has now become specifically associated with the child's fear and apprehension of the adult universe—

> Five years of cringing child small,
> Bewildered by the barren wall,
> Laughed Atlantic its heated summer,
> This I do not remember.
> O the fearful cliff wall,
> And the fearful sapling nigh,
> And the dove that will hurt me,
> And the great hand of the sky.

The incompleteness and fragmentariness of sensuous experience—the experience of the child—would seem, now, apart from one or two partial exceptions such as the *The Scarf of June* and *Two Loves*, to be an end, rather than a means.

Certainly in the more pretentious of the recent poems we find that Mr. Eberhart is inclined to use Blake as an artificial prop to his wavering grasp of his experience, whereas in *Maze* or *Request for Offering* his distinction could be defined rather in terms of his difference from Blake than in terms of his likeness to him: and certainly we find that that obsession with decay (the eyeballs and the skeleton) which is the inevitable corollary of his sensuous impressionism, his intimate tactile seismography, is prone, when he writes from a less precise pressure, to degenerate into a species of lurid emotional melodrama (' my mind beats lively as a disease '). ' I must think; I have felt overmuch ' remarks Mr. Eberhart in one poem; yet now it seems more and more that as soon as he tries to go beyond the ' fragment ' of experience, to create some pattern out of the fragments, nothing much happens except that the fragments themselves lose precision and contour, dissipate into a series of vague gestures, into (say) the Whitmanesque urge

> I flung myself down on the earth,
> Full length on the great earth, full length,
> I wept out the great load of human love

or into a rather literary preoccupation with the seventeenth-century death-sense—

> I try something new, I break my skull,
> Death, I try to get into you.

*Realm* and *The Humanist* might be said to suggest a comparison with the disorganization that afflicted such poems of Blake as *The Mental Traveller* and *The Crystal Cabinet,* were it not that the dissipation of Mr. Eberhart's poetic energy does not necessarily tend to obscurity.

Not all the longer and later poems are without interest. Even in *The Soul Longs to Return Whence it Came* there are, at the beginning, passages of the attractive personal movement, and the odd poem *Orchard,* though it isn't altogether satisfactory because of a tendency to statement where the realization should be most sharp, gives tentative indication of a new manner—soberer, less nervous, but still sensuously rich. In his volume the signs of a genuine talent take on the whole a less mature form, but they are still unmistakable; Mr. Eberhart remains one of the few poets whose future work may still be worth reading.

To read over the first page of *East Coker* is to realize that we have before us the work of a real poet, and that the distinction of the movement is something personal to Mr. Eliot, something which only he could have accomplished:—

> . . . there is a time for building
> And a time for living and for generation
> And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
> And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots
> And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.

It is a genuine and distinguished movement; and yet it is perhaps the most spineless, the most nerveless, the most painfully weary movement in which a distinguished poetry has ever been created. There was life and power, even if largely of a negative order, in Mr. Eliot's apprehension of the degradation of the Waste Land, and there was a resilient clarity in *Ash Wednesday's* perception of the garden within the desert. But here Eliot writes, proleptically, as an old man, a poetry that is in essence passive. There is a flicker of restrained agony in such a vision as this:—

> . . as, when an underground train, in the tube, stops too
> long between stations
> And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence
> And you see behind every face the mental emptiness
> deepen
> Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about;

and there is a bitterness of disillusion in the passages on age:—

> What was to be the value of the longlooked forward to,
> Long hoped for calm, the autumnal serenity
> And wisdom of age? Had they deceived us
> Or deceived themselves, the quiet-voiced elders,
> Bequeathing us merely a receipt for deceit?

where the characteristically epigrammatic close injects a sudden tremor into the verse's incantatory movement. Yet the only conviction—if one can use so positive a term—that emerges is that things temporal, the uneasy nerves that trouble Mr. Eberhart, are ultimately of no account, that 'the only wisdom we can hope to acquire Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless.' With

reference to *Ash Wednesday* one might speak of resignation, here there is nothing to be resigned to:

> I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
> For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
> For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
> But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.

Because it is honest *East Coker* is not a depressing poem: but it is the most gloomy verse that Mr. Eliot has given us.

Whether or no it is an important contribution to twentieth century poetry I am sure that it was necessary for Mr. Eliot to write it. One can easily enough point to its shortcomings. The tendency to abstraction that was typical of *Burnt Norton* is perhaps more prevalent, and its significance less clearly defined—

> (There is, it seems to us,
> At best only a limited value
> In the knowledge derived from experience . . .):

and there is a cumulative insistence on certain mannerisms which suggests that Mr. Eliot is not only here and there imitating himself ('What you do not know is the only thing you do know' etc.), but also those who in the first place borrowed their modes from him ('Where you lean against a bank while a van passes, And the deep lane insists on the direction Into the village . . .' And *cf.* the stanzas of section 4). Yet one cannot unequivocally deplore this since Mr. Eliot shows that he is clearly conscious of what he is doing:

> You say I am repeating
> Something I have said before. I shall say it again.

Perhaps *East Coker* is best regarded not as a poem—not as a system of 'concepts' as was *Burnt Norton*, to which in some respects it seems to form a sequel—but rather as a number of passages of poetry alternating with talk about, discussion of, the experience the poetry is incarnating. In it Mr. Eliot is trying himself out in this mode or that, looking back at the modes he has adopted in the past and asking what it all comes to. Glibly enough one might retort that the answer seems to be Not much, until, remembering the

magnificent sequence of *Gerontion, The Waste Land, Ash Wednesday,* and the *Ariel* poems, and the history of civilization during the generation in which Mr. Eliot has been writing, one realizes that it isn't we who have the right to smile. Mr. Eliot says that he stands ' in the middle way ' and that ' old men ought to be explorers ' (' through the cold dark and the empty desolation '): he may have found, in trying to learn to use words, that ' every attempt is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure Because one has only learned to get the better of words For the thing one no longer has to say,' but he reveals, in this peculiarly autobiographical document, that same moral integrity and that same seriousness of mind that have made his work one of the chief bulwarks in our time against ' the general mess of imprecision of feeling.'

> Like cats in airpumps, to subsist we strive
> On joys too thin to keep the soul alive.

This quotation from Young's satires stands as epigraph to Mr. Empson's volume, and it states very neatly not only Empson's own position but that, perhaps, of all contemporary poets. The dissatisfied tone of Mr. Empson's notes would seem to indicate that he finds it difficult to preserve his ' joy ' in that precariously serious wit that created *To an Old Lady*: Mr. Eberhart's tendency to regress to childhood suggests that he finds it difficult to maintain his delicate balance between the joys of the senses and the interests of the adult: while the limp, weary movement of *East Coker* suggests that Mr. Eliot, who has long ago seen through Wit and long ago learned as an adult to discipline the senses, is beginning to wonder where lies the joy that should come of experience. The integration of the poetic experience—the creation of the poem as a whole—is a problem that is inseparable from this search for the soul's joy, and we have seen how our poets of to-morrow have in the main chosen to ignore the problem; how Mr. Empson and Mr. Eberhart have in more subtle (and very different) ways learned to evade it; and how Mr. Eliot in *East Coker* seems content merely to admit that the problem does exist, that it's one he has been preoccupied with in the past and may have to tackle again in the future. One hopes he will, for it is difficult to see where else those who are concerned about poetry to-day are likely to find direction and sustenance.

W. H. Mellers.

# MARVELL

*ANDREW MARVELL, by M. C. Bradbrook and M. G. Lloyd Thomas (Cambridge University Press, 7/6, 161 pp.).*

To anyone interested in the deeper causes of change in literary taste it would seem necessary to distinguish the Marvell revival of the last twenty years from the more general revival of interest in 'Donne and the Metaphysicals.' The establishment of Marvell as a major poet took place more slowly and with less literary éclat than the rehabilitation of Donne, being freer, perhaps, from the influence of mere fashion. And this literary recognition has been followed by a recognition of Marvell's representative quality in a period of English civilisation which seems to have some special significance for our perplexities. Both as man and poet he touches our interests at many points, and it is significant that the attention he has received since the tercentenary of 1921 has been, on the whole, of the right kind. The Poems and Letters have been handsomely edited,[1] the poems have been the subject of some of the best criticism of two or three good critics, and the volume of M. Pierre Legouis, *André Marvell, poète, puritain, patriote,* is the kind of scholarship that makes for understanding and enjoyment.

The present book 'is intended as a critical study of Marvell, both as a representative of his age and as individually remarkable.' I hope it is not ungenerous to say that it is likely to be of most use to those who have already made some critical assessment of the individually remarkable in the poems, for the more specifically critical sections are rather varied in quality. The criticism of the various Mower's Songs, for example, continually seems to offer more than is actually achieved by analysis, and it is in connexion with one of these that one seems to detect a central weakness. In *The Mower to the Glo-Worms,* we are told, 'the tone is lowered rusticity emphasized:

> Ye Country Comets, that portend
> No War, nor Princes funeral,
> Shining unto no higher end
> Then to presage the Grasses fall;

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[1]By H. M. Margoliouth (O.U.P.). The only cheap edition of the *Poems and Satires* is that by G. A. Aitken in the Muses Library (2 vols.).

but again the conceits are dexterous and not at all rustic. It is the scene itself which supplies most of the positive feeling in these poems, as here where we are obscurely reminded that all Flesh is grass.' The final comment points in the right direction of course, but ' rusticity ' is misleading, the conceits are more than dexterous, and the reminder is hardly obscure. The quoted stanza does two things simultaneously: by playing on our ' practical,' everyday feelings it makes the death of princes seem as insignificant as the fall of the grass, whilst ' presage ' combines with the ineluctable movement of the last two lines to make the fall of the grass portentous and terrifying, like the death of princes.

> Flesh falls within sight of us, we, though our flower the same,
> Wave with the meadow . . .

It is Hopkins' *Deutschland* that comes to mind rather than the proverbial saying, for what the poem conceals under its slight exterior is a sense of the unity of living things, human and non-human, a sense of their common root and their common fate. The fancy of *Upon Appleton House*

> —What Rome, Greece, Palestine, ere said
> I in this light Mosaick read—

is, in the Mower's lines, transformed into delicate but sure power. It is the power springing from deep sources which somehow fails to come through in Miss Bradbrook's and Miss Lloyd Thomas's analysis of the greater poems. They pay homage to it, often in apt phrases, but sometimes the criticism dissolves into mere marginal comment, and occasionally the author's knowledge of the minor literature of the period seems to get in the way of a fresh and central approach. Thus Marvell's symbolism (if we use that word) is surely different in kind from the emblematic technique of the mid-century moralists invoked in Chapter III, and it is certainly not ' the use of Spenserian conceptions,' perhaps derived from William Browne and the Fletchers, which gives ' depth and resonance ' to *The Garden* (p. 54). A criticism more thoroughly purified of formal and extraneous elements would have found the rhythmic variations of that poem—the triumphant movement of, ' Yet it creates, transcending these . . .', the glad ease of ' There like a Bird it sits, and sings . . .'—of far greater significance than the ' Spenserian tradition, in which Metamorphosis is the poetical

answer to the decay of beauty and the triumph of time,' which may or may not have had something to do with the transformation of the fifth verse. The comment on *An Horatian Ode,* too, though just, is a little too neat. The complexity of attitude is such that it can hardly be resolved into ' a triple movement, the Hegelian thesis, antithesis and synthesis '; and although the central subject may be, as the authors insist, not Cromwell or Charles but England, the force of the poem springs from a deeply felt conception of Destiny which interpenetrates the whole. Readers who thought they were familiar with the poems will, however, find much in these chapters that they can profit by. Some of the best pages are devoted to the religious poems. Here the comment is less peripheral and more controlled; and the comparison between Marvell and Arnold on page 66, for example, is genuinely illuminating because based on the sensitive directness of the analysis of *The Coronet* which follows.

The main value of the book, however, is that it does bring out—in a fresh and stimulating way—the relation between the poet and the changing intellectual, social and political climate of his age. ' The co-ordinating power behind Marvell's greater work,' the authors observe justly, ' was more than a personal power.' Marvell was not simply, like Dryden at a slightly later date, merely a great representative figure, but his individual genius depended, in many varied ways, on a living tradition which the mid-century changes destroyed. With the Restoration energy and interest were directed into new channels, and Marvell wrote no more great poetry. Miss Bradbrook and Miss Lloyd Thomas allow us to view those changes from various angles. They bring out the significance of the linguistic development (most students of the period know the views on the function of language expressed by Sprat, the Secretary of the Royal Society, but only a few will have come across the equally pointed remarks of Marvell's opponent in controversy, Samuel Parker); and they successfully relate the ' co-ordinating power ' of Marvell's poetry to what had been a more than personal sense of the nature of man and of society. Of James Harrington they remark that he, ' like Marvell, could unite the most discrepant material because he felt the continuity of the natural and the social order; because he kept the old Elizabethan conception of the body politic . . . Such a view had been Marvell's: but after the Restoration, external circumstances no longer endorsed it.' Instead,

there was ' Hobbes' new theory of the state as a contract, a piece of cosmic business.'

A word must be said in conclusion of the picture of the man that emerges from these pages. Just as, in his poetry, Marvell co-ordinates into one powerful whole a most extraordinary range of interests, feelings and attitudes, so as a man he is remarkable for a firmness of temper united with a rare power of flexible and sympathetic understanding. (Miss Bradbrook and Miss Lloyd Thomas bring this out well in their account of his few surviving private letters: the tact displayed there, they make plain, was more than a social quality.) Thoroughly cosmopolitan, ' his feelings were not only those of a patriot but of a solidly local patriot into the bargain '; an intellectual of genuine detachment and disinterestedness, he immersed himself for more than twenty years—without ever losing those qualities—in the day-to-day routine of public business; disillusioned, he never took refuge in cynicism. The authors write well —giving copious extracts—of *The Rehearsal Transpros'd* and the other controversial pamphlets in which wit and literary ability were brought to the service of Toleration; but it is their account of Marvell's attitude towards the major political events of his time, an attitude sometimes regarded as paradoxical, which most deserves our attention:

> ' To make the best of whatever government was established was not a capitulation: however much he personally disliked the Restoration, the Cause would still remain too good to be fought for. But when the government of the country was jeopardized by irresponsible and self-seeking rulers, the Cause demanded that he should do his best to uphold the principles of right administration within the framework of the monarchy. It was not a question of fighting for rival parties representing different systems, but of maintaining standards of integrity which should have been the property of any system.'

When all qualifications have been made, the book remains—particularly in these days—something to be grateful for.

L. C. KNIGHTS.

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